

# INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR

*A New Frame of Reference  
for Psychology*

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## ⌘ FOREWORD ⌘

The authors of this book, as teachers and professional psychologists, have as their major professional responsibility the interpretation and application of psychology to their students and clients. In this task they have sometimes found themselves deeply disturbed and confused by the conflicts existing in the accumulated knowledge of their science. While psychological research has produced a tremendous number of facts, trustworthy principles which would make possible the prediction and control of individual behavior have often been lacking. Since our students are for the most part preparing to enter professions such as education, clinical psychology and related fields, where the ability to predict and control behavior is essential, we have been impelled to a search for a frame of reference which would assist both our students and ourselves to a clearer and more meaningful understanding of human behavior.

Both authors in their training were deeply indoctrinated by a behavioristic approach which has not always proved adequate to this purpose. Each of us has been operating in different areas of applied psychology for some time. In the course of this experience we, like many other psychologists, have been led to certain strikingly similar conclusions. With the opportunity presented by the development of this book, and the mutual stimulation afforded by such a task we have developed a frame of reference which has proved useful not only to us but to our students and clients as well. We have experimented with its use over a period of eight years in such fields as clinical psychology, educational psychology, mental hygiene, psychology of personality, and the psychology of learning. It has served us well in these areas. It is presented here in the hope that it may prove equally useful to others.

The frame of reference we have developed is a more complete exposition of the basic postulates of a phenomenological system of psychology first proposed by Snygg in 1941 and published in the *Psychological Review*. It is our belief that psychology has been approaching

some such interpretation for a number of years. Historically, this approach seems to have been given its initial impetus through the work of Freud and his followers. Among the many psychologists who have made recent and significant contributions to this approach are Lecky and Gardner Murphy. A great many others, operating more or less independently, have been approaching such a phenomenological point of view toward behavior. Almost every current issue of the various psychological journals carries some reference or interpretation which has more or less bearing on this frame of reference. To us, this volume represents but one more step in what we have come to feel is an inevitable trend in psychology.

In attempting a frame of reference for the entire field of psychology in a single volume it has been necessary to impose mutual restraints upon ourselves and each other to avoid permitting our enthusiasms to carry us away. A new frame of reference makes new uses of the tremendous body of already existing psychological research. In a volume of this size it is obviously impossible to give credit to all of the research workers and theorists whose work has contributed to the development of such an approach. We have not always found it possible to trace ideas and concepts to the numerous original contributions on which they may be based. So large a body of experimental work has bearing upon this frame of reference that it has been impossible to document many aspects of this approach as adequately as we desire.

Among the many people who have read this manuscript in its early stages, we are particularly indebted to Carl Rogers, Nicholas Hobbs, Lucien Kinney, and Gardner Murphy for a number of valuable contributions to our thinking. We are indebted to Victor Raimy for the loan of his doctoral dissertation, some of the concepts of which are basic in our thinking, and to our students who have greatly helped us in the clarification of our ideas. We should like also to express our appreciation to the American Psychological Association for permission to quote from its journals.

The reader will note that this volume is divided into three parts. In Part I we have set forth the fundamental aspects of the phenomenological system we propose. Part II is devoted to an exploration of

some of the most important implications for applied psychology as these appear to us. Part III is devoted to a discussion of the relation of a phenomenological system to more traditional points of view. As an outline of a theory we expect that, like everything else in science, this frame of reference we propose may undergo shifts and changes as it is subjected to wider consideration. As fallible human beings we can only hope that this is "if not the truth, then very like the truth."

D. S.

A. W. C.

January, 1949.



PART I

THE PERSONAL APPROACH  
TO BEHAVIOR





## Σ CHAPTER I Σ

### *The Challenge to Psychology*

THE most pressing problem confronting man today is man himself. The tremendous strides of the physical sciences in the past few decades have given man an almost unlimited degree of control over his physical environment. As a result the world stands at a crossroads where we must choose to use these forces for human progress or destruction. For as human beings strive to satisfy their needs, these controls over the physical environment will be used, whether we like it or not. How they will be used is up to man himself.

The satisfaction of human needs cannot be achieved by control over our physical environment alone. It is a function, even more, of man's relationships with man. In fact the advances of the physical sciences, which have placed in our hands the means for our own destruction, have made the problems of human behavior and human relationships the most pressing of all. Our success in meeting the challenge posed by our possession of these new tools depends, in the final analysis, upon the behavior of individuals and their relationships with each other. It is not a problem which can be settled by a few wise men over a conference table. Nor can the problem be evaded or postponed. It confronts us at a time when the ordinary citizen has achieved a power in society which makes any individual's behavior a matter of concern to all of us.

Our society has become so complex and its people so interdependent that the failure of one individual among thousands can disrupt the delicate balance of organization so that millions may suffer. The behavior of an individual is no longer the concern of his own little group. It concerns all of us. But to deal adequately with the problems of human relationships, we shall need to understand as never before the whys and wherefores of human behavior. The science of psy-

chology thus becomes more and more important in human thinking and in the search for solutions to our common problems. Time presses upon us and there is need to discover new and more adequate ways of viewing human behavior if our science is to help us meet the challenge with which we are faced. Where else should we look for the solution to the problems of human behavior but in the "science of behavior"?

Up to now psychology has succeeded in amassing great quantities of facts about people and the ways in which they behave. Most of these facts are of a normative character; this makes it possible for us to state that, given a particular situation, "the chances are" that people will act thus and so. But this sort of description is not enough. To deal adequately with our problems we need to know how the particular individual in the unique situation will behave. It may be that we shall never reach this goal, but we must try by utilizing every means at our disposal, both old and new. The science of psychology, like any other science, must be constantly pressing upon its frontiers and seeking new explanations for its phenomena.

#### FACTS AND FRAMES OF REFERENCE

Science is constantly seeking for facts; but in the last few years we have come to understand facts in a new way. A fact, we find, is not an independent thing that we can memorize and depend upon and know that it will always be true. It is true only in its frame of reference, which means that it is false in others. What one thinks of as fact depends upon the frame of reference from which he makes his observations. When we feel our railroad coach moving it may be because we are leaving the station; but it may be because we are watching a moving train on the next track. What we believe to be true will depend upon the way in which our observations are organized and the point from which they are made. In the same way "... a bomb dropped from an airplane over a European city is seen by the aviator to fall in a straight line, by an anti-aircraft gunner to describe a parabola, by a North Polar observer to rush counter clockwise, by a Martian to perform a spiral movement about the sun, while to an

observer on Sirius it would seem to follow a curved path through the heavens . . ." (54).<sup>1</sup>

It seems clear that a science must do more than collect facts. It must also actively concern itself with the discovery and development of the frame of reference most suitable for its purposes. Whenever a more adequate frame of reference for phenomena is discovered, the science in question receives a tremendous impetus. Facts previously unobserved acquire meaning and recognition, and they in turn make possible the discovery of new facts and relations.

### THE PROGRESS OF SCIENCE

The progress of science, it is now clear, is in two directions. The first is toward the discovery of new facts. This unceasing search is continually turning up new facts inexplicable in the old frames of reference. In turn, the scientist is forced to develop new frames of reference wide enough to encompass the greatest number of known facts at any moment. Once a more adequate frame of reference has been achieved, its effectiveness is soon demonstrated by the discovery of a great number of new facts and relations.

Let us examine this principle by examining Fig 1. As man reached a point in his development where it became necessary for him to deal with numbers of things, represented in our figure by the marks from *A* to *B*, he developed a number system, represented by the triangle *ABC*. The development of this number

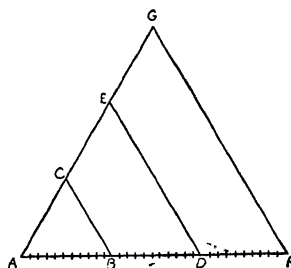


FIG. 1.

system made it possible for him to deal with his environment more effectively than before and to understand many new concepts. In time, however, this number system became inadequate as new facts were discovered and new needs arose, represented in our figure by the marks from *B* to *D*. These new facts could not be dealt with in the old num-

<sup>1</sup> Figures in italics refer to the Bibliography on pp. 363-374.

ber system and out of this need a new frame of reference, *ADE*, was developed, called algebra. The new frame of reference did not deny what had gone before but made possible dealing with matters never before approachable. But even this frame of reference could not last forever and soon man's insatiable striving made it necessary to deal with still more new facts and problems, *D* to *F*. This in turn led to the development of still another frame of reference, *AFG*, which mathematicians know as calculus. This relationship of facts and frames of reference is characteristic of the progress of science. Through the continuous search for facts and frames of reference in which they can be comprehended the frontiers of knowledge are pushed forward.

#### THE TRADITIONAL FRAME OF REFERENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology, too, has had a general frame of reference for a number of years. We might call this frame of reference the "external approach" to human behavior, by which we mean that behavior has been observed from an outside observer's point of view. Thus, the psychologist observed his subjects through tests, laboratory experiments, and in many other ways to determine just what they would do in this situation or that. As he placed his subjects in one situation or another and observed their behavior change, he came to explain their behavior in terms of the situations to which he observed them reacting. In this way the causes of behavior were assigned, with one modification or another, to the environments in which the subjects were reacting. Delinquents, for example, were observed to come very frequently from broken homes, from association with bad companions, from poverty-stricken homes, or from homes with immoral parents, and these were regarded as environmental influences which produced the delinquent behavior.<sup>2</sup> Making their observations in this frame of reference, psychologists were led to describe behavior in terms of the environmental stimuli which seemed to an outside observer to be acting upon and producing the behavior of the individual.

<sup>2</sup> The authors recognize that this is an oversimplified description of the traditional frame of reference of psychology. For a more complete and detailed discussion, see Chapter XV.

This frame of reference has aided psychology tremendously, and during the three-quarters of a century that psychology has been an experimental science psychologists have amassed a tremendous amount of data about the circumstances under which different types of behavior occur. As a result of these studies they have made progress in the prediction of normative behavior, of what the "average," "normal," or "typical" individual or even the "typical ten-year-old" may do under a given set of circumstances; but, as scientists, they are not yet ready to undertake the exact prediction of what a particular individual will do under those same circumstances. As a matter of fact, there is some question as to whether even this prediction of normative behavior is based on scientific principles, since many of these predictions are based on no idea of causal relation other than the idea that "because something has happened so many times in the past it will happen so many times in the future" (32). This method of predicting behavior cannot be applied with certainty in any situation where the circumstances or the group whose behavior is predicted are even slightly different. There are even grave doubts that individual behavior is ever repeated exactly. When measured by the immediate physical environment, the chief distinction between animate behavior and inanimate behavior is that animate behavior varies.

It is true that prediction of averages is useful in fields like advertising and political or business administration, which are concerned with behavior of masses, and in which the prediction of what one particular individual will do is seldom necessary. However, in the great majority of situations this prediction of normative behavior is not enough. In most cases we deal with individuals. When we do this it is usually necessary to predict behavior of each individual with greater accuracy than normative methods allow.

When psychologists attempt to do this they encounter a great deal of difficulty and few of them can be persuaded to make such predictions in any detail. If, for instance, a psychologist bases his prediction of what Oscar Jones will do in a given situation on what the "normal" or "typical" person has been found to do in that situation, he does it with the knowledge that Oscar almost certainly differs from

the norm in some way or other and consequently will not do exactly as predicted. In fact, there is a distinct possibility that he will do very differently.

#### THE NEED FOR A NEW FRAME OF REFERENCE

If psychology had remained a purely theoretical science, to be talked about and not applied, this individual variability in behavior might have presented no particular difficulties. The academic psychologist could have gone on discussing behavior in terms of norms and averages, using the standard deviation and the normal curve of error to express the individual variability that he recognized but could not predict. But in the field of applied psychology this is not enough. The great majority of teachers, counselors, psychiatrists, and clinical psychologists are required to predict and control the specific behavior of particular individuals. Knowledge of what the typical person will do is not enough to meet these people's need, especially as they are most often dealing with individuals who come or are brought to them precisely because their behavior is not "normal." Perhaps a majority of the applied workers are customarily dealing with such individuals.

The lack of accurate principles for predicting the behavior of individuals does not, of course, affect the work with "abnormal" individuals alone. All too often it serves as an obstacle to the understanding of "normal" individuals as well. No individual ever continuously conforms to the norm. His behavior cannot be predicted by norms. Not all children from broken homes become delinquent. Some children have been known to convert their bad companions; it is well known that many of our greatest men have come from poverty-stricken families. Somehow we must find a more adequate frame of reference to aid us in understanding individual behavior.

To fill the needs of our times psychology must provide a more adequate frame of reference for understanding individual behavior. To meet this challenge we propose to develop in this book an alternative frame of reference. We have described the external approach to human behavior as observing behavior from an outsider's point of view. There is another way in which we can observe behavior, however, which we shall examine in this volume. That is, we may observe hu-

man behavior not from an outsider's point of view but from the point of view of the behaver himself. This frame of reference has sometimes been called the phenomenological approach and sometimes the personal approach to behavior.

## Σ CHAPTER II Σ

### *The Personal Frame of Reference*

#### THE USE OF THE PHENOMENAL FIELD IN PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTICE

IN the personal frame of reference we attempt to observe behavior from the point of view of the individual himself. As a matter of fact, that is what almost all people, whether professional psychologists or laymen, proceed to do as soon as they are confronted with the task of controlling the behavior of a single, specific individual. "What does he want?" "What is he thinking?" "How does he feel about this?" are some of the questions they ask as they try to put themselves in his place and understand and anticipate his behavior. The clinical psychologist may have carried out research on the relation between juvenile delinquency and such objective factors as family income, the age of parents, the number of brothers and sisters, and the percentage of home ownership in the district; but when he is actually dealing with a delinquent boy he is almost certain to ask "What does he think of himself?" "What does he think of his parents?" and otherwise attempt to see the situation from the point of view of the boy. Even the objective psychologist in the animal laboratory finds himself thinking "That rat is hungry" or "This rat is afraid." Laymen do this without shame. They take it as a matter of course that the ideas, emotions, and opinions of people have an effect upon their behavior and they are consequently alert and sensitive to them.

Psychologists have not been able to avoid this point of view. During the past quarter century the practical advances in applied psychology have been, almost without exception, the result of personal, phenomenological concepts. Such experiential concepts as trial, reward, and goal are derived from an earlier period, but such inferences about the personal field of the behavior as belonging, self-concept, level of



aspiration, attitude, interest, satisfaction, frustration, the whole field of projective techniques, and dozens of other concepts derived from the phenomenological approach have become, within the last decade, indispensable tools of our profession.

In an unpublished manuscript Carl Rogers has listed Angyal (7), Maslow (126), Mowrer and Kluckhohn (137), Lecky (107), and Masserman (127) as writers who have recently approached the problems of personality from this general point of view. To these we can now add Gardner Murphy (138) and Rogers himself (164). Krechevsky (103), Leeper (108), and Snygg (200) have used this approach to the psychology of learning, as has Hilgard in his most recent analysis of the subject (87). Bartlett's classic on remembering (16) is purely phenomenological, as is the less-known but important research on the same subject by Wees and Line (215). Lewin and his colleagues (116), and more recently Sherif and Cantril (190), have demonstrated the usefulness of this approach to social psychology. Among the clinical psychologists who explicitly base their theory and practice upon the client's personal field we can name Combs (42), Raimy (154), Rogers (164), and Rosenzweig (169), but there are scores of others. Gordon Allport (4) with his personalistic psychology and L. K. Frank (65) with his "private worlds" have been using the same frame of reference for several years. In the field of industrial psychology Elton Mayo (130), and F. J. Roethlisberger (160) have discovered and eloquently presented the principle that the most potent factor in the production rate of a worker is not the physical conditions in his environment but the meanings which he ascribes to them. The outstanding classic in the field of driver psychology, the field analysis of automobile driving by Gibson and Crooks (70), uses the same frame of reference to deal with behavior which is inexplicable in terms of the physical field. In all this wide variety of psychological fields the personal frame of reference functions as an instrument of prediction better than anything else we have ever tried.

The balance of this chapter will be devoted to the derivation of the basic principles which govern individual behavior in the phenomenological frame of reference. The reader will bear in mind that the "facts" and principles of such a frame of reference will necessarily

often conflict with the "facts" and principles derived from the more traditional external frame of reference. In some cases the phenomenological picture of behavior will be the exact opposite of the non-personal picture. We must remember, however, that this does not mean that one set of facts is true and the other false. Each set of facts and principles is true in its own frame of reference. In choosing between the external and the phenomenological points of view the only question a psychologist has to ask is "Which is the more effective frame of reference for the prediction of human behavior?" not "Which point of view gives results which agree more closely with the facts already accepted?"

#### THE PHENOMENAL FIELD AS THE CAUSE OF BEHAVIOR

Laying aside, for the moment, the objective facts about behavior that some of us have learned, let each of us look at his own behavior as we actually see it while we are behaving. We find lawfulness and determinism at once. From the point of view of the behavior himself behavior is caused. It is purposeful. It always has a reason. Sometimes the reasons are vague and confused, in which case the behavior is equally vague and uncertain; sometimes the reasons are extremely clear and definite, but everything we do seems to be reasonable and necessary at the time we are doing it. When we look at other people from an external, objective point of view their behavior may seem irrational because we do not experience the field as they do. Even our own behavior may in retrospect seem to have been silly or ineffective. But at the instant of behaving the actions of each person seem to him to be the best and most effective acts he can perform under the circumstances. If, at that instant, he knew how to behave more effectively he would do so.

From the point of view of an observer who knows the location of an exit the behavior of a fire victim in rushing back again and again to a jammed door is completely unreasonable. From the point of view of the victim in those circumstances, it is the most reasonable thing he can do because the door is the closest approximation to an exit that he can find. However capricious, irrelevant, and irrational his behavior may appear to an outsider, from his point of view at that

instant his behavior is purposeful, relevant, and pertinent to the situation *as he understands it*. What it looks like to others has no bearing upon the causes of his behavior. The important thing is how it seems to the person himself. The drunk who turns on the light so that he can hear better is, from his own point of view, acting rationally but in a fuzzy and relatively undifferentiated field. Behavior as seen by the behaver is not due to chance, it is not motiveless. It is a caused and pertinent aspect of the world as he experiences it.

#### ALL BEHAVIOR IS LAWFUL

It is a necessary assumption of all scientific systems that behavior is regular and lawful. Chance behavior would be unpredictable and uncontrollable. It is therefore encouraging to find that, as the behaver sees it, behavior is relevant, caused, and by implication lawful. But if the behavior is caused, where are the causes? To the individual the causes of his behavior appear to lie in the world about him and his relation to it. As he experiences it he eats, not because of stomach contractions or a lowering of the sugar content of his blood or because of habit, but because he is hungry and the food is available and attractive, or because he does not wish to disappoint his wife, or just because he feels like eating. In any case he feels that his behavior is a reasonable and a necessary result of the situation in which he finds himself.

#### THE PHENOMENAL FIELD IS THE DETERMINANT OF BEHAVIOR

This situation is of course not the physical situation or the objective situation but the phenomenal situation, the situation as it appears to the behaver. An "hereditary" Democrat (or Republican) may believe that Republicans (or Democrats) are customarily wrong-headed, misguided, and in some degree enemies of society. If he does he will act and vote accordingly. He will not doubt the validity of his own views and will think that he is basing his behavior on objective facts. It should be clear, however, to other people that his behavior is determined, not by the objective field, but by a personal, individual field<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Field" rather than "situation" to express the existence of facts and relations not present in the immediate spatial situation. For example, it may include an awareness of people not present, past events, a concept of the future, as well as such abstract entities as responsibility and justice.

which is not identical with that of any other individual. From a non-personal point of view or, in fact, from the point of view of any other person, the individual values in his field are illusory, irrational, and unreal. To the individual himself, however, they are real and reasonable and are among the direct causes of his behavior. To discard these individual characteristics from the causal field would be to discard any possibility of understanding or predicting his individual behavior.

Several years ago one of the authors was driving a car at dusk along a western road. A globular mass about two feet in diameter suddenly appeared directly in the path of the car. A passenger in the front seat screamed and grasped the wheel, attempting to steer the car around the object. The driver tightened his grip and drove directly into it.

In each case the behavior of the individual was determined by his own phenomenal field. The passenger, an Easterner, saw the object in the highway as a boulder and fought desperately to steer the car around it. The driver, a native of the vicinity, saw it as a tumbleweed and devoted his efforts to keeping his passenger from overturning the car.

In understanding this behavior it is not necessary to know what the object "really" was. Each occupant of the car behaved toward it according to its nature in his own phenomenal field. What a botanist or a geologist might have known about the situation had no effect on the behavior of these travelers as they struggled to get the wheel. The behavior of each was determined, not by the objective facts, but by his own phenomenal field. In other words, the factors effective in determining the behavior of an individual are those, and only those, which are experienced by the individual at the time of his behavior. Lewin has expressed this as follows: "The food that lies behind doors at the end of a maze so that neither smell nor sight can reach it is not a part of the life space of the animal. In case the individual knows that food lies there this *knowledge*, of course, has to be represented in his life space, because this knowledge affects behavior. . . . The individual will start his journey if he thinks the food is there even if it is actually not there, and he will not move toward the food which actually is at the end of the maze if he does not know it is there" (115).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See also Snygg (199), page 158.

In the episode cited above, if the nature of the two phenomenal fields, or even the character that the object would assume in the phenomenal field of each, could have been predicted in advance even a layman could have predicted the subsequent behavior.

If we are to use the phenomenological frame of reference this concept of complete determination by the phenomenal field must be our basic postulate. It may be stated as follows: *All behavior, without exception, is completely determined by and pertinent to the phenomenal field of the behaving organism.*

### THE NATURE OF THE PHENOMENAL FIELD

By the phenomenal field we mean the entire universe, including himself, as it is experienced by the individual at the instant of action.<sup>3</sup> This frame of reference, with some possible variations, has also been called the personal field, the private world (65), the behavioral field (100), the psychological field, and the individual's life space (113).

### THE PHENOMENAL FIELD AS "REALITY"

Unlike the "objective" physical field, the phenomenal field is not an abstraction or an artificial construction. It is simply the universe of naïve experience in which each individual lives, the everyday situation of self and surroundings which each person takes to be reality. To each of us the phenomenal field of another person contains much error and illusion and seems an interpretation of reality rather than reality itself; but to the individual himself his phenomenal field *is* reality, the only reality he can know. It is much richer, more complete, and meaningful than the objective field of the physical sciences, which is, in reality, merely the shadowy and abstracted lowest common denominator of many phenomenal fields.<sup>4</sup>

It cannot be too strongly stressed that the restriction of "reality" to the attenuated field of physics means a complete abandonment of everything that we ordinarily recognize as real. One of our friends has a desk on which he writes and on which his friends sit and drip

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the evolution and function of the phenomenal field see Chapter XV.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter XV, page 335.

cigarette ashes. An inquiry about what the desk really is had the following results:

"It is really cellulose."

"What is that?"

"That is a molecular combination of carbon hydrogen, and oxygen."

"What are they?"

"Those are atoms of different kinds."

"What are they?"

"They are made up of protons and electrons."

"What are they?"

"They are really charges of electricity."

"What are they?"

"They are not matter, just waves."

"What are they?"

"Not waves, in anything, just waves."

"What are they?"

"All right, waves of nothing."

In other words, what the desk really is depends upon the professional phenomenal field of the person who answers the question. From the standpoint of chemistry our friend has some rather refractory and unusable cellulose and from the standpoint of subatomic physics he has no matter at all. Neither science says that he has a desk because neither science deals with desks.

No matter what we are told, our own phenomenal field will always seem real, substantial, and solid to us. It is the only field and the only reality we can directly experience. It includes all the universe of which we are aware—including not only the physical entities which exist for us but such other entities as justice, injustice, and public opinion.

Although the phenomenal field includes all the universe of which we are aware, we are not aware of all parts with the same degree of clarity at any moment. For instance we walk through our living rooms without paying specific attention to the exact location of the lamps and the chairs, but our behavior indicates that we are aware of them. We do not bump into them. The awareness of these objects is at a low level of differentiation which is adequate for the purposes of the moment. If our needs change, however, these same chairs may

become highly differentiated in awareness, for instance, if our wives suggest redecorating. The level of awareness seems to be the lowest possible level which is consonant with the satisfaction of need. Thus at any moment in the field perceptions may exist at any and all levels of differentiation from vaguest to sharpest.

This assumption of complete causal relationship between the behavior of an organism and its phenomenal field at the moment of action would not have stood up a generation ago when the field of consciousness was thought to include only those highly conscious aspects of awareness which can be verbalized in the laboratory. In such a field individual behavior would have to be very precise and completely rational and everyone knows now, after Freud, that it is not. Nor would our assumption stand if the field were divided, as Freud supposed, between one part of which we were highly conscious and another part of which we were unconscious. Psychologists who adopt the Freudian conscious-unconscious causal field are forced to base their predictions of behavior on two completely different and conflicting causal concepts, with resulting confusion and uncertainty. Fortunately, the studies of the Gestalt psychologists on the nature of the perceptual field have removed both of these difficulties. The phenomenal field, they have shown, is not a two-part field of consciousness and unconsciousness. It is a unified field of figure-ground phenomena of which the individual is more or less conscious. In such a field the behavior's experience that there is a one-to-one relation between his field and his behavior which is part of it becomes completely reasonable. The unified nature of behavior is a function of the unified nature of the field. The highly conscious aspects of behavior correspond to and are parts of the precise and highly differentiated parts of the field, and the vague and fuzzy aspects of behavior correspond to and are parts of the vague and incompletely differentiated aspects of the field.

#### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHENOMENAL FIELDS

At first thought this development may seem to have brought us to an impasse. We have discovered regular, completely determined behavior, but we have found it within the private phenomenal field of

the behavior. Since this field cannot be observed directly by any other individual it may appear to the reader that in this frame of reference the causes of behavior are so secret that actual prediction of behavior must be beyond any outsider's power. Indeed, if the phenomenal fields of different individuals were completely private there would be no way of knowing what another person's field is like and the prediction and control of another's behavior would, of course, be impossible.<sup>5</sup> But unless I wish to believe that my own phenomenal field is the only thing that exists and that other people have no existence except as parts of it, I must believe that the phenomenal fields of any two individuals are somehow connected. When I whistle to a dog, call to a friend, or lecture to a class, the dog, my friends, and the students, in a large percentage of cases, behave as if the sounds I make in my phenomenal field are also present in theirs. In other words, changes in my own field are often accompanied by behavior on the part of others which indicates that a change has also taken place in their phenomenal fields. If we did not accept this as true there would be no point in our attempts to communicate with one another or to control one another's behavior.

It is probable that this relationship arises in the following way: Each of us is born into a situation in which certain common characters and objects exist. For example, both the Eskimo and the South African tribesman are born into a world where things will fall if they are dropped, where there is ground under the feet, where there are people around them, where there are forms of precipitation, where each experiences color and sounds. Even among such remote people as these there is a considerable degree of agreement between the things they experience. This is more so among people in the same culture, who have many more common aspects as potential characters of their phenomenal fields, of their individual "realities." Thus it is possible, through that part of the phenomenal field which is common to two persons, for communication to take place. For instance, among most members of western society there is a common phenomenal

<sup>5</sup> This is the point Brunswick (26) had in mind when he spoke of "encapsulation into the central layer" in objecting to the phenomenological approach as used by Lewin.



character about bodily gestures which makes some communication possible although the spoken languages are different. However, this is true only between people to whom the physical movement has the same phenomenal significance. An American, to whom the nod means assent, will be unable to communicate by this means with a Greek, to whom it means negation, until he discovers the meaning of the gesture in the other's field. It is not the physical nature but the phenomenal character of the act that is important in determining behavior. Communication is essentially the process of acquiring a greater mutual understanding of one another's phenomenal fields and it can take place only when some mutual characters already exist. In speech, for instance, communication is possible only to the extent that the objective physical sounds or characters have the same meanings in the two phenomenal fields. An American cattle fancier found his ability to communicate with a Scottish dealer much enhanced as soon as he discovered that "coo" meant not cow, as he had inferred, but calf. The problems of semantics are due to the circumstance that meanings called up by the objective, physical entities of language, the sounds and the combinations of characters, agree only to the extent that the behavioral fields are identical in a given area. The same words often have very different meanings in the phenomenal fields of different individuals. Even people from the same general culture, if strangers, often have difficulty in communicating, but old friends who have shared many experiences can understand one another's fields so well that they can communicate and anticipate one another's behavior without using words at all.

The well-known phenomenon by which twins communicate with one another in a private language is possible because of the mutual nature of so much of their experience, which results in an unusual correspondence between their phenomenal fields. People who have common experiences tend to have common characteristics in their phenomenal fields and as a result show common tendencies in their behavior. One of the authors, who had done some high jumping as an undergraduate, found to his embarrassment that as a track coach he was unable to keep his right foot on the ground when any of the high jumpers he was coaching made his jump in competition. This was

not due solely to his eagerness for them to clear the bar. He was also anxious for good results from his shot-putters and other field men. But as he had never been a shot-putter himself he did not as completely share their fields and consequently did not duplicate their behavior.

Experiences are phenomenal in character and the fact that two individuals are in the same physical situation does not even give a relatively common experience, if they already differ markedly in their phenomenal fields. No one can seriously contend that sitting in a college classroom for a period could represent the same experience to a child of six or to an adult who is not interested in the topic as it does to a student who is anxious and ready to learn.

However, people who share common roles in a common culture and its potentialities for common experiences inevitably develop common characters in their phenomenal fields and consequently in their behavior which mark them off from people of other cultures. These culture characteristics include not only such easily verbalized facts and items of information as are often formally taught in schools, but also un verbalized concepts about the role of the individual which are so all-pervading and so universally accepted that they are noticeable only to visitors from other cultures. Such universally shared cultural concepts are primarily responsible for such culturally characteristic behavior as the central European facial expression, and the Japanese smile which is apparently the result of feelings of shame about exposure of the inside of the mouth.

One circumstance that has helped to prevent general realization of the attenuated and abstract character of the true physical field is the circumstance that individuals of a common culture will judge many characteristics as objective, because they are common to their phenomenal fields, which are not objective in the sense that they are common to people of all cultures. As a result the meanings and characters common to all the members of a culture are usually accepted by them as absolutely real and universally valid. Even such an apparently physical and objective entity as the spectrum is not experienced in the same way in all societies. The ancient Greeks did not

discriminate between blue and black and the Chukchee consider yellow and green a single color, "grass color."

#### THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE PREDICTION OF INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR

We have now made the two basic assumptions necessary for the use of the phenomenological frame of reference for the prediction of individual behavior. Our first postulate was that the causes of behavior lie completely within the phenomenal field of the behavior. This field is not open to direct observation by any outside observer and it is not open to introspection by the behavior himself without a resultant modification of the field. As we shall see later, if he changes his purpose he changes his field. However, the individual's behavior, which has by postulation a one-to-one relationship with his phenomenal field, *is* open to observation. Therefore, from a study of the individual's behavior it is possible to reconstruct, by inference, his phenomenal field.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, the process of prediction of behavior involves two steps: (1) the securing of an understanding of the subject's field by inference or reconstruction from behavior and (2) the projection of the individual's future field and his consequent behavior. The reconstruction of the field from the behavior has already been described as an operation of the "Under what circumstances would I have done that?" character. Much of the topological work of Lewin is of this type, and essentially the same procedure was used by Shepard (192)

<sup>6</sup> As we have explained elsewhere (Chapter XV), the external psychologist cannot perform the analogous operation and infer changes in behavior and changes in the nervous system from one another except in the case of gross lesions in the brain because the changes in the nervous system are electrochemical events, which at the present time, are not translatable into behavioral terms. At the present time the problem is further complicated by the fact that under ordinary circumstances the changes in the nervous system are not open to observation.

The same inability to infer one from the other also holds true, in slightly lesser degree, for the relation between behavior and past experience. Since the same objective situation or event can have such diverse effects upon different individuals or on the same individual at different times, it is impossible to predict behavior from history or infer history from behavior with any degree of accuracy.

when from the behavior of his rats he inferred the existence of floor cues which he himself was unable to experience. The teacher who hears his pupil report that " $3 \times 0$  is 3" and infers that the child's reasoning is "Zero is nothing so it can do nothing to the three," has taken this step. The operation of inferring the field from the behavior acquires its validity as a phenomenological method from the postulate that behavior is completely determined by the phenomenal field. It therefore follows that variations in behavior are always indicative of concurrent variations in the field. The complete operation of prediction imposes two important conditions. To reconstruct an individual's field from his behavior it is necessary to understand what fields are alike, and it is necessary to understand how fields change to be able to project the future field.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PHENOMENAL FIELD

##### FLUIDITY

One characteristic of the phenomenal field, which makes it difficult to study, is its fluidity, its constant change. Like the Irishman's pig which ran around so fast that he could not count it, it is hard to pin down for purposes of observation. As we observe it, it changes. However, both the content of the field and the nature of the change which occurs can be observed if we can secure a series of reports in the nature of the field at successive periods of time. The visual aspects of the field, for instance, can be observed and their direction of change discovered by tachistoscopic studies in which the reproduction of a stimulus card which has been presented for a very brief instant enables us to get a picture of the field as it existed during that instant. Much of our knowledge of the phenomenal field comes from this type of experimentation.

##### ORGANIZATION

In the same physical situation or in objectively identical situations the phenomenal fields of different individuals differ. Furthermore, during successive presentations of the same physical situation the phenomenal field of the same individual changes. However, although the content and form of organization vary from individual to individual and from time to time, the phenomenal field is always organized

and meaningful.<sup>7</sup> In the example cited earlier in this chapter the object in the road was either a tumbleweed or a boulder, it was not a meaningless object. Indeed a meaningless object would not exist as part of the phenomenal field. Reproductions of tachistoscopic material<sup>8</sup> are never the chaotic masses of unrelated stimuli that must be postulated by objective theory. On the contrary, reproductions of such material, if they can be made at all, are always organized and meaningful.

Apparently this is a basic characteristic of the phenomenal field which may be explained as follows: The field of any individual is both much more and less than the field which is potentially available in the immediate physical environment. It is much more in that it includes many things not physically present. The most detailed phenomenal field, however, includes only a very few of the vast (in fact almost infinite) number of objects, details, and meanings which are present or might be present in the fields of other individuals in the same physical situation. For instance, if any of us began to make a close study of the room in which we are at this moment it is probable that we could spend months, years, or even a lifetime in making a continuous series of discoveries about it, even though we may think we are already very familiar with it. Figs. 2 and 3 contain all the three-letter words in the English language, but it is extremely unlikely that anyone who was not actively seeking for new details and aspects in the figure would ever discover even one of them.

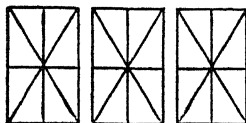


FIG. 2.

The point is that the phenomenal field of any individual is the product of selection. This selection is not capricious, nor is it due to lawlessness and chance. It is carried on by the individual as a means of satisfying his needs, and in conformity with the existing organization of his phenomenal field.

*Organization of Meaning.* When we look at meaning from the

<sup>7</sup> It might be better to say that for all subjects able to take part in experiments the phenomenal field is organized and meaningful. It is almost certain that some individuals do, temporarily, have fields that are almost completely disorganized, but in such cases the behavior is correspondingly disorganized and incoherent. Such behavior is found in traumatic shock and cerebral hemorrhage.

point of view of the individual, we discover that the meaning of any object or situation is simply an awareness of the behavior that the object or the situation requires or enables him to make.<sup>8</sup> If it neither requires nor facilitates behavior it does not appear in the phenomenal field except vaguely and briefly as an object of inquiry. As a conse-

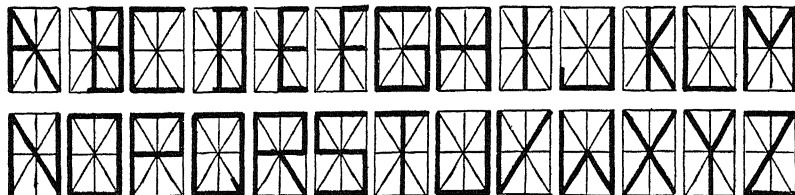


FIG. 3.

quence of our efforts to satisfy our needs, one of the most important aspects of human behavior is a continuous search of the environment for new meanings which will enable us to behave more effectively in achieving our ends. This is an active search,<sup>9</sup> of which the individual's phenomenal field is the result.

<sup>8</sup> Since the purpose of an individual's behavior is the satisfaction of his own need, the phenomenal field is usually organized with reference to the behavior's own phenomenal self. The meaning of an object or event is thus his definition of the relation between the object and himself. However, when we identify with others, as we often do, we can also experience the situation from their point of view, in which case the meaning may be the relation we think it has to them. In other words, a situation which is not dangerous to us may seem so because we recognize that it is dangerous to another. It seems fairly certain that this seeing the situation from another's point of view is not possible unless some degree of identification exists. The different attitude of people on opposing sides in a war to new weapons is a case in point. Effective weapons introduced by the enemy are cruel and inhuman because they threaten us or our friends, similar ones introduced by ourselves are clever and humanitarian because they protect us and our friends.

<sup>9</sup> The authors are convinced that the age-old problem of free will versus determinism is the result of the circumstance that human behavior can be observed, as we have pointed out earlier, from two different points of view. From the point of view of the behavior, who can remember much of his previous fields and anticipate possible future fields, each with its own pertinent behavior, there exist many possibilities of behavior, and he can think of himself as having considerable freedom of choice, in fact free will. On the other hand, any serious observer, no matter which point of view he uses in studying behavior, sees so much evidence of causation that conclusions of determinism are inevitable. The behavior views himself as active, the external observer sees him as passive. (*Note continued on opposite page.*)

*Effect of Need on Organization.* At any given time the field of a given individual is organized with reference to his needs and the activity by which he is trying to satisfy them at the time. The field of a professor playing golf, for instance, is very different from the field of the same professor engaged in teaching a class or in conversation with his wife. In each case the field is organized around the activity of the moment and the perceptions and memories which occur are those which have bearing upon his immediate problem. If thoughts of the lecture intrude into the golf game or thoughts of his wife intrude into the lecture, it is only because: (1) the intruding activity has phenomenally not been brought to a conclusion and from his point of view is still in progress; (2) the intruding activity is more important to the satisfaction of the individual's needs than the activity in which he is formally engaged.

*Type of Organization: Figure-Ground.* The process of selection and organization in the field is also manifest in the fact that the phenomenal field is made up of figure and ground or, as earlier psychologists called them, focus and margin. Not all parts of the field are equally clear and distinct. The figure may be large and relatively undifferentiated or small and highly differentiated, but it is always more differentiated than the ground.

The figure-ground relationship is familiar to all psychologists but the accompanying illustration will show some of the points we wish to make. If the whole figure is observed as a candlestick there is relatively little detail. As soon, however, as the observer looks for the details in the base of this stick the ones in the top fade into ground. To illustrate the point made above, the observer will note that the figure is always something. As long as any part of it is figure, it is meaningful. It is either a vase, a candlestick, two faces, or, at the least, an undifferentiated object. When it is seen as two faces there is a striking change in the character of the area between the faces as it fades down into ground. When it is seen as a vase or candlestick

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As a science, phenomenological psychology must accept determinism because prediction and control are only possible in a field where behavior is lawful and caused. As a method, it also recognizes that the behavior often feels that he has a choice of behavior even though none exists in reality, since he always chooses the one which is pertinent to his phenomenal field at the instant of action.

the same area emerges into figure and a previously non-existent solidity emerges that is striking. Objectively there has been no change, but the phenomenal change can have a marked effect on the behavior of the observer.

An example of the figure-ground relation and its effect upon behavior may be seen in the difference between the field and behavior of a motorist who is testing his brakes, and the field and behavior of another who is stopping his car to avoid an imminent accident. In

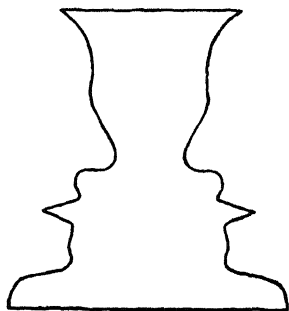


FIG. 4.

the first case the figure is rather diffuse and includes some awareness of his tires; consequently the car is brought to a stop in a way that will not damage them. It is almost impossible for a responsible owner to bring his car to the required, abrupt stop under those conditions since as soon as he feels the wheels slide he eases up on the brake pedal. In a real emergency, however, the object to be avoided and the need for stopping stand out so sharply that concern for the tires drops down into the

ground, and the brakes are applied with violence and decision.

The effect of such a narrowing of the figure upon behavior was amusingly illustrated by one of Snygg's grade-school classmates. He was so intent upon chasing a jack rabbit down the road with his car that he suddenly discovered that he had followed it through a barbed-wire fence and into a pasture.

The use of these illustrations should not mislead the reader into thinking that figure exists only in the visual aspects of the field. It may be in any sense field or combinations of sense fields, as you may demonstrate to yourself by the process of thinking about your contact with the chair in which you are sitting. While you were looking for the two faces in the illustration above this feeling of contact was in the ground and had relatively little effect upon your behavior, but by now the feeling of pressure upon the buttocks may have become so strong, as it emerges into figure, that you may have already shifted your weight to become more comfortable. If these feelings had re-



maintained in the ground the behavior in response to them, if any, would also have been part of the ground and much more vague and generalized.

Anything in the field can become figure, including bodily fatigue, pain, and abstract ideas. An excellent example of the way in which we can share a common phenomenal field may be found in empathetic yawning, when the action of the yawner causes the fatigue feelings in the throat of an observer to emerge into figure with an inevitable effect upon his own behavior.

#### CONFIGURAL NATURE OF FIELD ORGANIZATION

Like all organized entities, the phenomenal field tends to maintain its organization. To say, as we have said earlier, that the individual selects his field in conformity with the field existing at the moment, is to say that the field is to a large extent self-regulating. Items within the field are interacting and interdependent, and any new thing in the field derives its properties from its relationship to the field as a whole. For instance, yawning by one person in a group will have a varying effect upon the other people present since it will have varying functions in their individual phenomenal fields. It may appear as a cue for the awareness of our own throat sensations, as a vaguely recognized sign of boredom, as a deliberate act of discourtesy, or it may not appear in the field at all. In any case its phenomenal character is affected by the observer's concept of the relation between himself and the person yawning, and his general concept of the current situation. From the phenomenological point of view it is reasonable to postulate that empathetic yawning occurs only when the secondary yawner has some feeling of identification with the first. If this should be verified by experimentation, we should have a valuable tool for the discovery of such feelings, especially in infancy and early childhood.

These are principles of field dynamics which we have been discussing and have long been familiar through the investigations of Gestalt psychologists. These laws apply not only to the so-called physical properties of objects but to all parts of the field, without exception. Because of the great difference in individual fields the same physical objects and events can have very different significance

in the fields of different individuals, or in the field of the same individual at different times.<sup>10</sup> This does not mean that the characteristics which objects or events assume in the phenomenal field of a subject are capricious or unpredictable. On the contrary, since they are determined by the relation of the new event to the rest of the field, they can be and often are predicted with a high degree of accuracy if the nature of the subject's pre-existing field has been correctly inferred. Material whose inclusion would necessitate a basic reorganization of the field, for instance, is accepted with extreme distortion and modification, or in extreme cases is rejected completely.

#### TEMPORAL ASPECTS OF THE FIELD

In some quarters the phenomenological postulate that all behavior is determined by and pertinent to the behavior's phenomenal field at the instant of action has been misunderstood. It is necessary to remember that the field at any instant is, from the point of view of the behavior, his whole universe, and consequently includes what he knows of the past at that moment and what he infers about the future at that moment. Like other parts of the field these memories of the past or expectations of the future will emerge into figure or lapse into ground in conformity with the needs of the individual and the activity he is pursuing. Like all parts of the field they are subject to distortion and modification by the general characteristics of the whole field (16, 215).

#### CHANGE IN THE FIELD

Changes in the field occur because of the individual's efforts to maintain himself and satisfy need. Each of us is constantly searching his field (the universe, to him) for details and meanings which will

<sup>10</sup> This has been a source of great frustration to experimenters using the external "objective" approach since it means that the same physical stimulus elicits varying responses or no response at all. As a result their prediction is necessarily on the basis of statistical probability with no hope for accurate prediction of the individual case. Under these conditions the stimulus-response theory can be saved only by assuming that "The subject selects the stimulus." This is perfectly true, but admitting it does not salvage the external point of view because the real question then becomes "What stimulus will the subject select and why?" With the tools and methods we have at the present time this question cannot be answered from the external point of view, but it is within the range of phenomenological psychology.

better enable him to satisfy his need (175, 176, III, 153, 25). This process involves a continuous change in the field, by the constant rise of new characters into figure and the consequent lapse of other characters into ground. This process, from the point of view of the behaver, is one of increased awareness of details and is therefore called differentiation.

"Differentiation may be defined as knowing a difference, the basic act of knowledge. It is the manifestation of the continuous process by which the integrity and organization of the field are maintained . . .

"The emergence of a new entity or character into figure implies the lapse of other characters into ground. Both are necessary for the existence of a difference and are not two independent processes but complementary aspects of the same process, which might be called "change." Since, however, it is the newly emerged figure, the focus of the behaver's field, which is the most directly potent in determining behavior, it seems more practical to emphasize the more effective aspect of the process and call it "differentiation" or "individualization" rather than the non-valuative "change" (200).

#### USE OF THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE IN PREDICTION

In theory the phenomenological approach offers several advantages over the external approach as a means of predicting individual behavior.

1. It deals with the behavior of the individual in his individual field. It thus brings all behavior, normal and abnormal, typical and atypical, within its frame of reference. Its laws are therefore laws which govern the behavior of all individuals, and not the typical individual alone.

2. It ascribes the determination of all behavior to the one causal field. This avoids and makes meaningless many persistent insoluble problems<sup>11</sup> faced by the external approach, which is unable to explain individual behavior on the basis of its own physical frame of reference, and must necessarily ascribe individual and deviate characteristics to other areas such as mind, past experience, habit, or the nervous system, which are either not open to observation or whose inferred nature is not open to verification.

<sup>11</sup> The mind-body dichotomy and its resultant problems, for instance.

3. It postulates a complete and regular relationship between the causal field (the phenomenal field) and behavior, making possible the inference of either from the other. This is not true of the external approach because none of the auxiliary fields, whether the mind, the physical organism, or past experience, can be inferred from behavior, nor can they lead, at the present time, to accurate inferences about individual behavior.

Indeed, the relation between the phenomenal field and behavior is relatively simple and well known, even to laymen, because of the lifelong experiences available to all people to observe the relation between their own field and their own behavior. As a result the process of reconstructing an individual's phenomenal field from observation of his behavior is a relatively simple and easy task and can be done with little training.

As a usual thing when we see a man scratch we can infer that he itched. When we see him yawn we often share his field so vividly that we are impelled to duplicate his behavior. The fact that this method of inference from behavior requires no instruments is not the least of its advantages. When the man with whom they are conversing fiddles with his watch, for instance, all but the most eager and obtuse people can infer that he is impatient for them to leave and take their departure without waiting to obtain an electroencephalogram reading or take measures of his heart beat and blood sugar.

The operation is of the common "Now why did he do that?" or "Under what circumstances would I have done that?" character. As applied by a naïve observer to an animal or a member of an alien culture this method may yield erroneous results in the initial stage, but when the inferred field is checked by subsequent behavior the necessary corrections are usually apparent at once. This principle operates in animal psychology as well (197, 198, 199).

4. Inferences about the nature of the phenomenal field can thus be checked and modified in the light of subsequent behavior. This not only gives the psychologist using the phenomenological approach a method of successive approximation which can lead to very accurate reconstructions of the phenomenal field, but it also makes the method objective in the sense that a number of observers can independently

come to the same approximation of the subject's field. Friends and relatives, without training, use this method very successfully in predicting and controlling the behavior of specific individuals, and we see no reasons why psychologists, with training, cannot do it better.

5. Since the relation between the phenomenal field and behavior is one familiar to all persons through their experience of their own fields and their own behavior, the causal concepts are readily understood by laymen. This should result in the more rapid training of workers, and in more effective communication between psychologists and counselors using the phenomenological approach, their clients, and the public. It also makes the findings of phenomenological psychology immediately accessible and useful to workers in other sciences.

6. As compared with the external approach, the phenomenological approach is more inclusive. Individual behavior cannot be predicted from normative behavior. On the other hand, accuracy in predicting individual behavior makes possible the prediction of normative behavior as well.

7. At the present time, it appears that the number of laws and concepts necessary to explain and predict behavior in the phenomenological frame of reference is much less than the large number of independent principles which are necessary to explain behavior in the external frame of reference. If these explanatory principles and concepts stand up under further experimentation the field of psychology will be greatly simplified.

#### EFFECTIVENESS OF A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

How effective can the phenomenological approach be as a means of prediction in actual practice? We should like, of course, a great deal more experimental evidence. Hundreds of applied workers are using individual and non-systematic versions in dealing with individual subjects. Possibly hundreds of others are using the concepts of phenomenologists like Kurt Lewin and others. Gestalt psychology is largely phenomenological, and most of the experiments along phenomenological lines have been conducted by Gestalt psychologists. With the exception of Lewin and his students they have, however, been more concerned with exploring the phenomenal field than with study-

ing its use as a means of predicting behavior. Lewin's actual predictions were usually of group behavior. One of us (Snygg) published the results of several experiments on the use of phenomenological principles in the prediction of animal behavior. In all cases the phenomenological predictions were more successful than predictions made from objective principles. Although the prediction of the behavior of individual animals was not attempted, he believes that after the basic principles had been developed it would have been possible to predict the selection of maze pathways by individual rats with a high degree of success.

As a point of departure for estimating the potential effectiveness of the phenomenological approach in the prediction of human behavior we may take the findings of Sorokin and Berger (201), that individuals can predict accurately about 80 per cent of their activities for the next twenty-four hours. These predictions were naturally made by the individual on the basis of his own phenomenal field, and it might be a natural assumption that an outside observer, basing his view of the field on inference, might not do as well. As a matter of fact the observer using the phenomenological approach can often do much better than the subject himself.

He cannot, of course, reconstruct the subject's present field with the richness, warmth, and detail that it actually has. His most precise approximation of that field is only a plan or schema of its general characteristics. But, in drawing inferences about the future field and the future behavior of the subject, he has two advantages that the subject does not have. For one thing, the observer's field includes not only his approximation of the subject's field but a great deal of other knowledge as well. The subject's predictions of his future behavior are based upon his present field exclusively, but the observer, with a broader field, can predict, as the subject cannot, impingements of new experience and their effect upon the field. Johnson, secretly planning to punch Smith in the nose, has knowledge of Smith's future field and behavior which is not, at the moment accessible to Smith. So does Jones, who has just written Smith a letter asking for money, and Miss Anderson, who has just put an F on young Smith's report card. Of course, none of these people can accurately predict Smith's re-

sponse to their advances from this knowledge alone. But they do have information pertinent to his future field which is denied him and, if they know him well they can predict what he will do when the predicted events occur.

The observer has one other advantage over the subject. The subject is a prisoner within his own present field and is sharply aware only of the present figure. Material in the ground is at such a low level of awareness that it is available only in the form of *vague* feelings and "hunches," if at all. Even if the ground material has been in sharp figure in the past it has very little influence at the moment. On the other hand the observer, if he has had an opportunity to study the individual's phenomenal field in the past, is aware of a great deal of this material, once figure and now ground, which is out of the subject's reach at the moment, but which under predictable conditions, under the stress of another situation, will emerge into figure again. In other words the behavior himself can be aware only of his present field; the observer, who has his own field, can be aware of much of the subject's ground material which provides most of the raw material for the future field. Furthermore, since the observer can view the subject's field unemotionally, without personal involvement, he can be aware of his characteristic distortions and use this knowledge in predicting the kind and degree of distortion of new material. The subject, again, cannot do this for himself<sup>12</sup> because to him the distorted field is reality. When we add to these advantages the one that the observer always has, by virtue of his role, a field that is more comprehensive than the field of the subject; it would seem that the theoretical possibilities of predicting individual behavior by phenomenological methods are almost unlimited, and that under favorable conditions the effectiveness of prediction should be considerably higher than that achieved by Sorokin and Bergers' subjects in predicting their own behavior. In a situation where the subject is well known to the observer, and his field had been thoroughly explored by acceptable methods, and where the latter is also well acquainted with the situation in which the subject is to find himself, the prediction should fall little below complete accuracy.

<sup>12</sup> He could, of course, reverse roles and do it for the observer.

## ⌘ CHAPTER III ⌘

### *How Behavior Changes*

#### THE PROBLEM OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Prediction in psychology would be as simple and direct as prediction in physics, if the behavior of living organisms did not change in an external situation which remains unchanged. We call this change in behavior by a number of names: learning, forgetting, remembering, problem-solving, and sometimes just change. From the point of view of the scientific problem of prediction and control, the existence of this change constitutes the psychologist's most difficult problem. There is no hope of predicting individual behavior with assurance and accuracy until psychology establishes a frame of reference which can make these changes in behavior lawful and predictable.<sup>1</sup>

#### PHENOMENOLOGICAL CAUSES OF BEHAVIOR

From the point of view of the behavior himself the causes of behavior are simple and orderly. As he himself sees it, all of his own behavior is caused and reasonable. It is quite true that he does not necessarily feel this way about other people's behavior. He may, like any other external observer, regard their behavior as irrational be-

<sup>1</sup> Changes in behavior must necessarily be explained, by psychologists using the external field as their frame of reference, by supposing that the change is due to the intrusion of some cause from outside the visible, external field. The kind of cause that is inferred varies according to the systematic point of view of the psychologists. Thus change in the direction of greater efficiency (learning) may be ascribed to practice or drill, or to changes in the nervous system; while change in the direction of lower efficiency (forgetting) may be attributed to time, interference of other behavior patterns, physical deterioration, or disease. In any case psychologists using the external approach tend to regard the behavior as a puppet, a mechanical recipient of stimuli whose behavior is due to the more or less unpredictable result of conflict and association between a very large number of independent and only partly known causes. For practical purposes much individual behavior is therefore regarded, by the external observer, as random or due to chance.



cause it is not reasonable with reference to his own field. He may therefore agree that the behavior of others is due to chance, repetition, habit, disease, or some other intrusive cause from outside the "real situation."<sup>2</sup> He will even, in retrospect, regard some of his own past behavior as error (because his field has now changed, perhaps as a result of the behavior), but as he sees it at the time of action, his own acts are determined, not by chance, repetition, or habit, but by the situation in which he finds himself. Whatever he thinks about the actions of others his own always seem to be the best response he can make to the situation as he experiences it.

This does not mean that he is clearly aware of the nature and cause of all his acts. In the phenomenal field, figure and ground shade into one another so that the relationship is not one of consciousness against unconsciousness but of more or less consciousness. Items or characters that have emerged sharply into figure have as their correlates behavior which is equally conscious and precise; items or characters which are less vividly differentiated from the field have as their correlates acts which are equally vague and undifferentiated. The mass activity elicited by a fly buzzing around the face of an uneasy sleeper is an example. In the sleeper's field the fly functions as a vague, relatively undifferentiated annoyance and the response is made accordingly.

One of the obstacles to the general acceptance of the phenomenological approach, in spite of our individual experience of harmony between the field and our own behavior, has been the impossibility of putting these vague awarenesses into words. As soon as we begin examining them in order to report them, in the manner of the introspectionists, they change and come more clearly into figure. The result is that the field reported does not correspond to the behavior observed earlier, and, when the memory of the field at the instant of action is further modified and distorted by the need to enhance the phenomenal self, the introspective report cannot be considered in any way an accurate representation of the actual field. The result is that introspective reports very frequently fail to verify the behavior's

<sup>2</sup> That is, his own field at the moment. Each person regards his present field as reality.

feeling of necessity and pertinence at the time of acting. They should not be expected to do so. The indistinct characteristics of the field cannot be verbalized and therefore cannot be communicated except by inference from their behavior correlates. Introspection is not a valid way of reconstructing the field, which can only be reconstructed from behavior.

#### THE NATURE OF CHANGE IN THE FIELD: DIFFERENTIATION

Beginning with the behavior's experience that all his behavior is determined by and pertinent to his phenomenal field, it necessarily follows that the way to change a person's behavior is to change his field. To predict or control behavior we must therefore understand how fields change.

One example of change in the field occurs in the process of perception, that is in the process of becoming aware of an object. This particular change in the field can be studied by showing a figure or group of figures for varying lengths of time to subjects who have been instructed to reproduce what they see. Such studies (24, 195) show that our first awareness of an object is of a vague, relatively undifferentiated whole which then differentiates in more or less orderly fashion into more detailed parts.

Since the properties of a newly emerging object are determined by its relationship to the rest of the field in this stage it can easily be, and frequently is, distorted and misinterpreted. "Illusions," "hallucinations," and many cases of mistaken identity, as well as the common errors of proofreading, result. Since the basic figure lacks detail we can attribute to it whatever characteristics make for better organization in terms of our immediate field and need. Mail from the Midwest addressed to Oswego, N. Y., is often sent by hurried mail clerks to Chicago, Illinois, and it is not until the general shape of the two words are compared that the reason is apparent. The clerks making the error undoubtedly see the anticipated "Chicago" clearly, even though it does not exist. Who has not made errors like that of the traveler who, expecting a bridge ahead, mistakes a billboard for the anticipated span? The ordinary background noises provide the mate-

rial for the schizophrenic's voices; and one of the authors as a young boy in a strange city had the thrilling experience of seeing a truck bearing the sign "Lane's Bootlegging Works" drive by. It was only after several seconds that the sign was more correctly and prosaically perceived as "Lane's Bottling Works."

The two factors which appear to determine the extent to which the original homogeneous figure is differentiated into details appear to be the need of the behaver and the opportunities for differentiation that are available. In spite of the fact that the process of differentiating and identifying five digits from a brightly lighted field may take a college student less than .03 second, there is evidence that the process of differentiation ceases as soon as the immediate need of the individual is satisfied. Location of an object in the visual field requires less differentiation than does its identification. Subjects who are asked to report the location of digits in an irregular field do not carry on the process far enough to identify them, but subjects who are asked to identify the digits almost always report their location as well (Snygg, *ibid*).

#### CHANGE IN FIGURE SIZE

Since the figure is the only aspect of the field of which we are clearly aware, change in the field means change in the figure. The figure may become smaller and more detailed or it may become larger and more vague and diffuse. There is a reciprocal relation between size and intensity<sup>3</sup> and theoretically the figure might become so large that it merges into the ground. This probably does not happen except in deep sleep or unconsciousness, as under ordinary circumstances the search for means of satisfying our needs results in a continuous emergence of new characters into figure.

#### LEARNING AS DIFFERENTIATION

In the same way that the figure is continually shifting in size it is also changing in character as new characteristics and entities rise and differentiate from the ground. Since precision in behavior can only result from precision of figure, it is this emergence into figure which

<sup>3</sup> Cf. "tunnel vision" under emotional stress.

is the phenomenological cause of more effective behavior, that is, of learning. Learning may, therefore, like perception, be considered a process of increasing differentiation of the field. In fact, the differentiation of a general solution or procedure, followed by the further differentiation of necessary details, is characteristic of all learning, problem-solving, and remembering. It is the pattern followed by very rapid changes in the field (perception), and by such less rapid ones as problem-solving and rote learning by adults, motor, speech, and vocabulary development by children, and of maze learning by both humans and white rats—to name only a few of the processes on which data are available. It has, at least, a superficial resemblance to the pattern of maze learning in such a biologically distant animal as the ant. Schnierla's hypothesis that ants learning to run a maze go through: (1) an initial period in which the subject learns a broad adjustment to the maze situation; (2) an intermediate stage in which progress is made chiefly in the local choice-point adjustment permitting efficient avoidance of the detours (182) . . . appears to be well substantiated. These steps conform to the general expectations of the differentiation field theory. However, once the general acquaintance with the maze situation has been achieved, the behavior of an ant at a choice point appears to be much more specific to the local pattern than is the behavior of a white rat in a similar situation (183). This is not surprising since the phenomenal fields of animals with such diverse physical structures could not be expected to be identical. What is important is that in the case of such diverse animals as ants, rats (197, 198), and men (143, 196) the first response is to the whole situation, and the behavior pertinent to the specific parts comes later, if it comes at all.

One good source of insight into this process is to be found in the character of errors made by learners. Contrary to the assumption of external psychologists, "errors" are not random or due to chance but, like all behavior, are accurate and lawful expressions of the behavior's field at the time. Errors in the animal-matching test at the III-6 and IV-6 levels of the Terman-Merrill intelligence test, for example, are the result of the child's failure to differentiate more clearly between the pictures. If he is able to understand the directions at all, the animals matched are invariably of similar size and shape.

The more common errors are due to his failure to differentiate between the pictures of the cat and the squirrel, the pig and the bear, the goat and the antelope. The elephant and the mouse, which are the largest and smallest of the pictures respectively, are almost never wrongly matched.

#### DIFFERENTIATION AS FUNCTION OF NEED AND OPPORTUNITY

In learning, as in perception, the degree and direction of differentiation are determined by the need of the behavior and the opportunities for differentiation that are available. It is well known that the rate of learning may be accelerated by increasing the strength of the subject's need;<sup>4</sup> it can also be accelerated by increasing the opportunities for the differentiation of essential cues and solutions (198, 199, 211).

In general the process of learning may be summarized as follows:

"When an individual . . . is confronted with a task, he shows an activity which might be described as the selection of a procedure for its performance. The general procedure he adopts is determined by his initial perception of the nature of the problem; it is a gross response to a relatively undifferentiated situation. Should (this) first procedure, the response to the gross situation, prove inadequate, the task is differentiated perceptually into segments, each of which may be solved by simple procedures.<sup>5</sup> The greater the number of subproblems into which the task must be differentiated and the greater the difficulties of the differentiation, the longer will be the time required for mastery" (196).

#### "REASONING" AND "PROBLEM-SOLVING" AS DIFFERENTIATION OF THE FIELD

Just as perception and learning differ only in the complexity of the differentiation required, so "problem-solving" or "reasoning"

<sup>4</sup> However, the strength of the need (or degree of deprivation) cannot be increased indefinitely. Eventually a point is reached at which the individual's awareness of the need is so acute and detailed that all other parts of the field fall into the ground, further differentiation of those parts ceases, and the behavior loses its effectiveness or even stops completely. The behavior of individuals in panic is an example.

<sup>5</sup> C.f. the way in which children unable to interpret the Terman-Merrill pictures fall back to a part response, saying for the "Grandmother's Story" picture: "There is a boy, and a girl, and another girl, and a lady, and a teakettle, etc." The physiological psychologist who, unable to cope with the problems of molar behavior, shifts to the study of molecular behavior, is conforming to a basic principle of human behavior.

differ from learning only in that in "reasoning" the differentiation of procedures is in auditory or visual terms, but not in kinesthetic terms as it may be in "learning." As an example of reasoning let us take the solution of a problem which confronted one of us several years ago.

The author had rented a garage in front of which was an electric light pole, about fifteen feet from the entrance. When he got into his car at 6:55 the next morning and began to back out to the street on his way to a 7:00 o'clock class he discovered the light pole by crumpling his right rear fender against it. The following morning he was very much aware of the pole and cut his car sharply to the left to avoid it, with the result that the right front fender scraped against the open garage door. Two major obstacles had now emerged from the ground, the pole and the door. A fence made it impossible to push the door farther out of the way and the pole could not be removed; so it was necessary for him to discover a path by which he could back his car from the garage to the street without striking either obstacle. It seemed quite likely that, by continuing to do the best he could to avoid these obstacles as he backed out, he would eventually learn (by differentiation of visual, temporal, and kinesthetic cues) to do so. However, such a course might require a considerable amount of time and cost more money than he could afford for repairs to the car. He was accordingly impelled to solve the problem more directly. Since he could drive into the garage without damage (because in driving ahead the field was more highly differentiated in terms of both visual and kinesthetic patterns), it was only necessary for him to discover some way of backing out along the same path. By noting (differentiating) two or three landmarks as he drove in at night it was only necessary for him to observe these points when he backed out the next morning. He had no more trouble during the rest of the summer in which he used that garage except for one morning when his alarm clock failed to ring. While he was backing out of the garage at 7:02 in a vain effort to reach a 7:00 o'clock class on time the urgency of the situation became the figure in his field, the landmarks dropped into ground, and he backed into the light pole.

As in learning and perception, the first awareness was of the gross situation, and the essential cues and orientation points did not emerge

into figure until the behaver became aware of his need for such details. The factors determining the degree and direction of differentiation were, again, the goal or need of the behaver, and the opportunities for differentiation that were available. It follows that individuals engaged in different activities will differ markedly in their experience of the physical situation. We differentiate in an effort to satisfy our needs, and differentiation is in terms of the activity in progress. As a demonstration of how details physically present all our lives, but not helpful to the satisfaction of our needs, never rise into figure, the reader is asked to listen to someone speak while keeping in mind the fact that foreigners often speak of English as the "hissing" language. He will find that speech takes on a different character with the hissing coming out into figure.

In a similar way most people go through life believing that leaves and grass are a uniform green and do not see the variations in shade and hue unless they take up landscape painting.

#### DIFFERENTIATION OF THE PAST ASPECTS OF THE FIELD: REMEMBERING

"Remembering," like "perceiving," "learning," and "reasoning," is a process of differentiation from the field and differs from them only in that the differentiation is largely (but not exclusively) from those parts of the field which represent the past. As in all field change the subject matter and degree of differentiation are determined by the need of the behaver and the opportunities for differentiation that are available. Like all items of awareness, memories are characteristically pertinent to the immediate problems of the individual and are not fortuitous or random. If we are distracted from our work by vagrant memories, it is because the work itself does not promise adequate satisfaction of our need. We are not always able to remember what we need but we do need what we remember.

The same characteristic of purpose and direction which selects our memories also determines the relations within the remembered material. As in all cases of differentiation of the field the sequence is from a relatively large and homogeneous figure, which usually cannot be verbalized, toward a more detailed and individuated but restricted

figure,<sup>6</sup> the process ceasing when the need is satisfied or the activity is abandoned. As a general thing the first emergence in remembering is not of isolated objects or individuals but of events which are then differentiated into their necessary details. For instance, a freshman student remembers his fourth Christmas because he then got the sled which led to the accident he remembered. Since the details must conform to the general pattern of the event in the present field, and the even itself must conform to and is distorted by the field at the moment of recall, memories, like perceptions, are subject to marked distortion and change. Unnecessary details are omitted and details necessary to the phenomenal event are added and "remembered" even if they were never seen or never existed.

#### ONE PROCESS OR MANY?

The ability of the phenomenal approach to reduce such apparently diverse processes as "perception," "learning," "reasoning," and "remembering" to a single process conforming to common principles is a welcome indication that this frame of reference may give us the simple orderly causal field for which we hope: but is this one process of differentiation really adequate for explaining and predicting all the changes of behavior that take place?

There are two types of challenges that the assumption of only one process must meet. One type arises from the phenomenological approach itself and goes something like this: "We will grant that the emergence of a more differentiated field is the process which enables an individual to behave more effectively; but what about the process that results in deterioration of behavior? Isn't forgetting an antagonistic process?"

#### NATURE OF FORGETTING

It is quite true that figure is constantly dropping back into ground where it is "forgotten" and loses its potency in determining behavior,

<sup>6</sup>It is not certain whether the differentiation in recall can be more detailed than the differentiation of the portion of the field during the initial experience. We are inclined to believe, pending more evidence, that only those characters can be "recalled" into figure that have emerged into figure in a previous situation, that ground characters cannot be remembered except as ground.



but this lapse into ground is not an independent process but is the necessary complement of the emergence of other features into figure. Since it is the newly emerged figure which has the major influence on behavior at the moment it seems better to emphasize the emergent aspect of the process and call it "differentiation" rather than just "change."

The second challenge may be presented from the external point of view and goes something like this: "I can see that differentiation seems to correspond to analysis, but do we not synthesize as well? Do we not constantly see examples of generalization? Are not synthesis and generalization the opposites of differentiation and, if they are, how are you able to get along without them?"

#### SYNTHESIS AND GENERALIZATION

To answer these questions it is necessary to remind ourselves that the phenomenal and external approaches are using two different causal fields as their frames of reference, and that, as a consequence, they cannot be expected to ascribe the same causes to the same behavior. The "objective" observer sees the external causal field as consisting of a number of discrete objects or stimuli, which exist independently of either the behavior or observer, and are static, unchanging, and without personal reference. As he sees it, therefore, learning is a process of progressive change in the learner's response to this static situation or rather to the stimuli in the situation.

Since this field is thought of as permanently and "objectively" differentiated (at least to the degree experienced by the experimenter), the changes in the learner's behavior must be the result, not of differentiation, but of new combinations of the unchangeable parts, that is, by association, integration, or synthesis. In addition another process must be inferred to explain the fact that as a result of this learning, other and similar situations also come to elicit similar behavior. For instance, subjects who have been taught to say "Dut" when they have been touched by a vibrator on one particular spot on their back only, begin to give the same response to other vibratory stimuli applied to nearby areas of the skin (69). Since the subjects would not have said "Dut" to these new stimuli before they had been

taught to respond to the first, their responses to the other stimuli must be explained, from the external point of view, by postulating an additional process, generalization, by which training in response to one stimulus created a tendency to respond to other stimuli as well. This in turn, leads to further multiplication of processes, since it is then necessary to postulate another and antagonistic process, differentiation, in order to account for the fact that further training may enable the subject to restrict his response to the original stimulus.

From the point of view of the behavior himself, however, the field is always organized and the process of change has been one of differentiation, i.e., of increase in detail, all along. Thus "generalization" results from failure to differentiate between the different stimuli. The fact that subjects in the study cited could distinguish, when asked, between stimulus points to which they gave the same response does not invalidate this analysis. As we have pointed out earlier, the field is determined by the activity of the moment, and ability to differentiate between two stimuli when asked to do so does not imply that they will be differentiated when another activity is in progress.

The usefulness of this phenomenological view for predictive purposes is substantiated by the fact that in both voluntary and conditioned responses the generalized responses are characteristic of the early stages of the learning process, and by the fact that they occur most frequently among those stimuli and in those points of stimulation among which differentiation is most difficult (69). The closer the false stimulus is in position and quality to the original stimulus the more likely it is to elicit the same response. Furthermore, there is evidence that the more the subject is hurried, that is, the less time he has for differentiation, the greater the chance that the response to the false stimulus will be made.

Synthesis and integration, from the phenomenological point of view, are the emergence into figure of several events or entities, differentiated from the ground by a common character. Detailed objects or events cannot be combined, as the external concept of synthesis or integration implies, but can be seen in a mutual relationship only as a result of their emergence together from a common field. As a result, "integration" does not occur when the individual is trying

hard to get it by concentration on details; it usually occurs unexpectedly in moments of relaxation, when the details have fallen back into ground.

#### THE PROBLEM OF PREDICTION: FACTORS DETERMINING CHANGE IN THE FIELD

We have accepted as our basic postulate the principle that all behavior is determined by the phenomenal field of the individual at the moment of action. While another person cannot observe this field directly, he can observe the behavior and thus reconstruct the essential characteristics of the field. This reconstruction provides an explanation of the individual's current behavior which, like the explanatory constructs of external systems, gives a great deal of satisfaction to the people who understand it. But, by itself, it does not enable anyone to predict the individual's future behavior. To predict accurately his behavior at any future time it is necessary to reconstruct his present field, as above, and then to follow up by using it to predict what his field will be at the designated time in the future. If we are correct in our assumption that change in the field is an active, purposeful, and lawful process, it is possible to make such predictions of the future field with a fair degree of accuracy. If we can discover the causal factors determining the kind and degree of change in the field the change can be anticipated; and both the future field and the future behavior, can be predicted. The next question that arises is, therefore: What are these causal factors?

We have already stated that the kind and degree of differentiation in the field are determined by the need of the behavior, and by the opportunities for differentiation that are available. It is our purpose to make, in the following section, an analysis of the factors and conditions which provide opportunities for this differentiation.

#### TIME MAKES DIFFERENTIATION POSSIBLE

One of the factors which provides an opportunity for differentiation is time. The process of becoming aware of a difference is not instantaneous. When material is exposed in a tachistoscope the amount of differentiation and detail increases with the increase in

the time of exposure (24). The same characteristic of progressive increase in differentiation is found in all reproductions of the field by children. In many cases the adult degree of differentiation of some aspects of the field is only reached after long periods of time, often years.

This applies to handwriting and drawing, both technique and product (85, 86), children's drawings (71, 89), number concepts (149), reading (86), and vocabulary, in fact to all areas of knowledge. In each case improvement comes with increased awareness of detail.

In an unpublished study on the vocabulary of juvenile delinquents Snygg found that the typical eight-year-old in the group had only a vague idea that "brunette" was "something." Typical definitions were "something bad" or "the name of a street." The ten-year-olds had a more detailed and delimited concept and knew that the word had something to do with girls and something to do with hair. The typical definition was "something girls wear in their hair." At twelve the typical concept was still more limited and differentiated as "the color of a girl's hair." When asked "What color?" the children invariably referred to the spelling of the word and answered "brown." The fourteen-year-olds had differentiated the color aspect more completely and defined brunette as "a girl (or person) with dark hair (or complexion)," leaving, in most cases, the precise sex differentiation for the superior adult level.

One of the difficulties in predicting and controlling learning from the external "objective" point of view is that time and repetition are often treated as causes of learning, although time consumed or number of repetitions by themselves have very little relation to the amount that is learned by any single individual. From the phenomenological point of view, however, time and repetition are not causes of learning, but they do give opportunity for the behavior to make the required differentiations *if he desires to do so*. The reciprocal relation between the strength of phenomenal need (interest) and the time required for learning a task may be stated as follows:

The less interest the more time.

The more interest the less time.

No interest, no learning.

No time, no learning.

#### ANTECEDENT PHENOMENAL FIELD DETERMINES DIFFERENTIATION

The major determinant of the kind and degree of differentiation which is immediately possible in any situation is, of course, the character of the existing phenomenal field. A limiting factor, therefore, is always the degree of differentiation already attained. In our society children differentiate the wheels from the rest of vehicles rather early and their drawings begin to show an awareness of how they are attached to vehicles at five or six. An adult Australian aborigine from an island off the north coast where no wheeled vehicles existed lumped all the vehicles he saw in Sydney as "houses that ran around." His reason for classifying them as houses was the fact that he saw people looking out of the windows. He showed no evidence that he had even seen the wheels, much less their mode of attachment. The same individual had very high skills as a hunter and tracker, which required a high degree of differentiation and observation of details.

The process of differentiation is quite regular and proceeds step by step (195), and it is futile to attempt to teach a pupil any detail for which he is not ready. An advanced five-year-old who had noticed the wheel-and-axle relation was met by incomprehension and, finally, resistance when he attempted to get his kindergarten classmates to revise their less differentiated pictures which showed the wagon box resting on the tops of the wheels. They were unable to see the difference between the two positions, and could not understand what he was excited about.

It is quite probable that the lack of confidence in their drawings, that appears in most children about the time they enter the third grade, is the result of misguided efforts by their teachers to get their drawings to conform to the phenomenal field of the teacher rather than that of the child. He learns that he is not making an accurate picture but is not able to see why it is not accurate. Schools where the teachers do not insist on their own personal adult "realism" do not produce this effect of discouragement and frustration.

## EXTERNAL FACTORS FACILITATING DIFFERENTIATION

To predict what the future field will be, it is also necessary to know what differentiations the individual will make in the new situations he encounters. Unfortunately, the only differentiations any observer can anticipate are those that he has made himself in that situation, since the other potentialities of it will be quite unknown to him. If he knows the behavior's phenomenal need and something of his current and antecedent fields, the observer can often predict with accuracy how the behavior will use and distort the potential material that he himself has differentiated, but he cannot, of course, predict what the behavior will do with potential material the observer himself has never discovered.

An amusing example of this difficulty is the experience of the prominent psychologist who put a rat in a discrimination box which did not have a lid. To his surprise the rat solved the problem of securing food without danger of electric shock by climbing over the partition and jumping down into the compartment where he saw the food. This possibility had not occurred to the psychologist, although it seems to have been obvious to the rat.<sup>7</sup>

There is no complete solution to this problem, although the ob-

<sup>7</sup> It is very difficult for external psychologists who take their own stage of differentiation as representing the "real" field to see behavior as other than random activity. Several of the conventional concepts in the psychology of learning are the result of their "objective" attempts to relate the behavior's behavior to the observer's field.

"For example: If the observer's field is more highly differentiated than the learner's, the latter's less precise behavior, since it does not conform to the situation as experienced by the observer, is said to be *error*.

"If the learner's field closely approximates the field of the observer, so that the learner does what the observer would do, the behavior is said to be *correct* or *insightful*.

"If the observer's field is less differentiated than the learner's there are two possibilities: (1) The learner's more precise and efficient behavior may lead the observer to discover features of the situation of which he had previously been unaware; in which case a third party might infer that the observer had learned by *imitation*. (2) The learner's mysteriously precise behavior in what to the observer is a relatively undifferentiated field may lead to the assumption that the behavior is determined by *instinct*. The farther removed an animal is from the human in sensory and behavioral possibilities, and the more difficult the reconstruction of its field, the greater the chances that instinct will be invoked as an explanation for its behavior" Snygg (200).

server who thoroughly understands his subject's field can in a large manner put himself in his place and anticipate his differentiations.<sup>8</sup>

#### EFFECT OF CONTRAST

Some field characteristics are so widely differentiated, however, that the fact that one person has differentiated them from a situation is a good assurance that others may do likewise. Differentiation may be said to take place more readily, for instance, when there is contrast between two parts of the field. However, phenomenal contrast is not a physical phenomenon as such, and for anyone to say that there is contrast between two areas is merely to say that he has differentiated them. Since there is some relationship between phenomenal fields there is a good likelihood that other people may also make the same differentiation, although it cannot be predicted without knowledge of their individual fields. The authors, for instance, do not find contrast in the same areas of an Ishihara chart because one of us is color blind. The objective differences which are potential phenomenal differences for most individuals are: difference in intensity, difference in quality, difference in size, difference in velocity or direction, and difference in location. This list of characteristics is helpful when we wish to arrange a situation which will result in a desired change in another's field, but it must be remembered that like all characters of the common external field they are useful, by themselves, for predicting normative behavior only. Whether they actually result in an awareness of contrast, that is, in differentiation, depends upon the observer. In no case do physical differences in these characteristics guarantee differentiation, and tachistoscopic experiments show that even these characteristics require time for differentiation to take place.

The external "objective" laws of association and learning such as similarity, contrast, contiguity, primacy, and recency accordingly apply only to normative behavior and are admittedly descriptive rather than causal (84). From the phenomenological point of view the first three turn out to be rough descriptions of the degree of differenti-

<sup>8</sup>For an account of the success of a trout fisherman who uses this technique see Noel Busch (29). Psychologists and teachers who use the external approach exclusively cannot adopt this method since they usually take their own field to be "real" and from a professional point of view deny that the subject has a private field of his own.

ation in the observer's field.<sup>9</sup> The exceptions, primacy and recency, owe their inclusion to the fact that the beginning and end of any event are the boundary points which define its direction. If the event is remembered at all, therefore, the beginning and end are remembered. This is not a mere matter of objective temporal location because if the temporal beginning of a story is not the phenomenal beginning, that is, if it does not lead toward the end, it is either changed in memory so that it will lead toward the end, or it is omitted altogether. In the same way if the temporal end of a story is not the phenomenal end, that is, if it does not conform to the individual's understanding of the story, it will be omitted, and a conclusion to which the story does lead will be substituted (215).

Perhaps the most important contribution of the personalistic point of view to the psychology of learning is the recognition that learning, like all other experiencing and behaving, is an active process which results from the efforts of the individual to satisfy his needs.<sup>10</sup> Whether we like it or not, people are always striving for the satisfaction of their need; they are always learning. If they are to learn the attitudes, skills, and facts that are socially desirable the situation must be arranged so that they can further their own ends by such learning. Mere presentation of material by repetition or drill is not sufficient. Habit and repetition are not, from the behavior's point of view, causes of behavior. As he sees it, he performs the act for the thousandth time for the same reason he performed it the second time, because it is the most effective way he knows of satisfying his immediate need. What any individual learns (differentiates) in a given situation is determined by the needs of the moment. A child practicing the piano may be learning to play the piano better. He may also be learning how to give the appearance of practicing with the least possible effort. See, for example, Dunlap's system of breaking "habits" by practicing them (58).

Summarizing from the phenomenological point of view, all be-

<sup>9</sup> "Entities are thus 'associated' when they are incompletely differentiated, having emerged together out of a common ground to satisfy a need. They are experienced as contiguous when they are incompletely differentiated in space or time and as like or opposite when they emerge in some mutual relationship" Snygg (200).

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of the relation of logic to behavior see Appendix A.



havior, without exception, is determined by the phenomenal field at the moment of action. To control or change the behavior of any individual it is necessary, therefore, to change his phenomenal field. The process of change in the field is one of differentiation, that is, of the emergence of new entities and characters from the undifferentiated ground. This process of differentiation is an aspect of the efforts of the individual to maintain and increase the organization of his field and, in particular, to maintain and enhance his phenomenal self. In other words, learning and remembering are aspects of an active, purposeful, and continuous process carried on by the individual for the satisfaction of his need. It is impractical to think of the learner except in terms of his own need, his own desires, and his own point of view.

From this point of view, the major determining factor in behavior is the need of the behaver. Any situation contains the potentialities for an almost infinite number of items of awareness and response. As a result of the individual's need some of these will be differentiated from the ground and emerge as figure in the phenomenal field. Only if we know the individual's needs and goals can we predict which of these potential characters will emerge into figure and what function they will play in the determination of behavior. It is the need of the behaver which gives meaning, direction, and consistency to behavior, and the failure of the external approach to find consistency and predictability in individual human behavior is, in a large degree, the result of the failure of the external frame of reference to supply an adequate answer to the question of what people need and why they behave.

## ⌘ CHAPTER IV ⌘

### *What People Strive For*

A SUPERFICIAL observation of the things that people seek might lead one to suppose that the needs of human beings comprise an infinite number of articles or experiences, including such diverse items as houses, overcoats, friendship, school success, nylon hosiery, and butter. Uncritical acceptance of these data leads the observer to fail completely in dealing with individuals whose motives are outside his experience or recollection. Thus, the teachers in a certain school who conceived the notion of cutting down misbehavior by granting a banner each week to the classroom showing the best deportment were completely unprepared for the results. Deportment was better in the lower grades but the upper grades went on a rampage. The lower grades worked for the banner, while the upper grades felt disgraced if they got it.

Until we have found more adequate methods of discovering the needs which individuals are attempting to satisfy and the goals they are trying to reach in this process, the individual's behavior will continue to frustrate our most carefully laid plans to control and predict his behavior. What is more, since his need lies within him, it does not seem likely that we shall ever be able to accomplish our objective from a purely external approach. Separate and conflicting needs are a great convenience to the theoretical psychologist as long as he restricts his activities to the explanation of behavior that has already occurred. For the clinical psychologist, however, the explanation of behavior is not enough—he must be able to predict as well as explain his client's behavior. If he is asked to deal with a boy who persists in setting fires, it is not enough to offer a plausible explanation after the house is burned down. Similarly, the industrial consultant must be prepared to foresee the likelihood of accidents before their occurrence.

To understand human needs we must find some method of under-

standing the unique personal organization of each individual. We must learn to see behavior as it appears to the behaver.

#### MULTIPLE NEEDS CONFUSING

But, it may be argued, if we adopt a phenomenological point of view, needs will always be unique to each individual, and we shall be no better off than we were before. At first glance this would appear to be only too true for when we attempt to determine the needs of individuals we are at once confronted with a tremendous number of goals toward which they are striving. Some people want high marks, others want new cars, approval from this person or that, security, or power.

Murray (139) has described twenty-eight basic needs as the fundamental motivations of human beings. Combs (36) has suggested a list of forty. In attempting such classifications two important difficulties arise: (1) How many needs shall one choose?—ten, a hundred, a thousand? Too many become meaningless; too few destroy the very dynamics of the behavior under observation. (2) The semantic difficulty makes overlapping of such categories inevitable. Such attempted classifications seem to us undesirable and even highly dangerous in the practical situation. For example, if one sees a very homely girl as suffering from a frustration of the need to be attractive, therapy is likely to be restricted to attempts to improve her appearance, whereas even the skill of a Hollywood make-up man might not be equal to the task.<sup>1</sup>

It is plain that such a multitude of diverse and conflicting needs will leave us in no better predicament than was true of the external approach. Somehow, if we would hope to predict and control human behavior, we must discover the more fundamental need or needs that everyone is attempting to satisfy. Any theory of human need which is adequate for the prediction and control of behavior must be

<sup>1</sup> The greatest value of such classifications of needs lies in the fact that they make statistical manipulations possible. They facilitate description and help to bring about a certain degree of agreement among judges making interpretations from case histories, projective devices, and personal documents. They are largely non-discreet descriptions of convenience and may or may not have any degree of validity in terms of the real nature of the personality under observation.

broad enough to include all human behavior in all cultures, at all ages, and at all times. All behavior without exception, from founding empires to winking an eye, must be accountable in terms of this framework. But where can one find so all inclusive a theory?

#### THE MAINTENANCE OF ORGANIZATION

In Chapter II we have suggested a possible solution to this problem in the characteristic of the phenomenal field to maintain its organization. To maintain their organizations is the dominant characteristic of all living things; indeed, it appears true of non-living things and of the universe itself. The simplest atoms tenaciously resist disruption, and heavenly bodies maintain their established orbits. In spite of its fluid condition, the lowly amoeba hangs together and resists destruction. Even when its environment dries up completely the amoeba may encyst and protect itself from such disturbing forces. Plants, too, display this characteristic, for grasses bent by the lawn roller regain their upright state, and the notched tree soon adjusts itself to the damage and maintains its organization. Among higher animals, wounds cover with scar tissue, and the entire body becomes a battleground as the organism adjusts to infection. In fact, as Dashiell (49) has expressed it, "Through all animal life an outstanding characteristic runs—the tendency of the organism to maintain its normality against internal or external disrupting agencies."

#### BIOLOGIC OPERATION OF NEED

It is this tendency of the organism to maintain its organization or equilibrium that Cannon (30) described in his concept of "homeostasis." Allport (4) speaks of this tendency as follows: "Even physiologists often embrace a philosophy of 'systematic relevance.' The self-preservative, self-regulating processes of the body imply to them a root tendency to maintain wholeness. In the constant return of all physiologic systems to a state of equilibrium, some see a 'wisdom of the body'; others a 'state of vigilance.' The more prosaic refer merely to 'homeostasis.' But whatever terms they employ these physiologic doctrines all assume an inherent tendency of every organism to form itself into one intricate homogeneous system."

Richter (158) has reported a series of experiments with rats to investigate this tendency of the organism to maintain internal balance or consistency. In these experiments the surgical creation of "need" for water, constant temperature, sodium, calcium, phosphorus, and carbohydrates resulted in vigorous attempts on the part of the organism to maintain its internal organization by actively seeking such materials in its environment. His adrenalectomized rats, for instance, were able to distinguish between water and salt solution in concentrations of but one part of salt in 33,000 parts of water, while normal rats made this distinction only when concentrations were as great as one part of salt per 2,000 parts of water. Richter concludes from his experiments that: "These forces have their origin in the deep biological urge of mammals to maintain a constant internal environment. The activities may be diverse, and there may be different goals, but the underlying biological drives remain the same."<sup>2</sup>

#### MAINTENANCE OF ORGANIZATION IN MAN

Turning to human beings, the very art and science of medicine has been predicated upon this fundamental characteristic. The task of the physician is to remove, destroy or immobilize the causative agent of disease and to help to build up the organism to the point where the body can readjust itself. The physician or surgeon helps this process along, but it is the organism itself which brings about the cure through its own return to integration. This action has often been referred to as the "healing power of nature." Psychology has long overlooked this important principle, and it is only recently that we have come to recognize its operation in psychological as well as physical functions. Mental patients, for example, often get well despite lack of treatment and even, sometimes, in spite of treatment. It is common observation that even under the most severe psychological shocks most people manage to make adjustments. Certainly it is true that most people do so without the necessity of psychoanalysis, psychiatry, psychotherapy, or other formalized treatment. As Fletcher (64) has put it in his discussion of this principle: "Rationalization of one's behavior is no less.

<sup>2</sup> For other work bearing on this problem see also Davis (50), Evvard (61), and Young (220, 221).

an act of organic defense against ego disturbance than is a change of blood count against infectious disease. The rise of temper against an insult is not essentially different from the rise of temperature against infection."

If this struggle to maintain the integration of the organism is seen in a purely objective sense, the only conclusion possible is that the fundamental motive of human behavior is the preservation of the physical organism. But, this is inadequate because many things men do are not directed toward their physical survival. They risk their lives in war and sports, they drive too fast, use alcohol, drugs, and even commit suicide. How can such activities be motivated by a need for self-preservation? Seen simply in terms of this need such behaviors do indeed seem paradoxical. When we observe them, however, as attempts by the individual to maintain the organization of his phenomenal self, they become completely consistent. What the individual is seeking to preserve is not his physical self but the self of which he is aware, *his phenomenal self*.

#### THE CONCEPT OF THE PHENOMENAL SELF

By the phenomenal self we mean those aspects of the phenomenal field to which we refer when we say "I." In common with the rest of the phenomenal field it has the feeling of complete reality, and its physical boundaries are roughly the skin or clothing surfaces. These boundaries are capable of extension, for example, when using a cane or when driving a familiar vehicle. It is a common observation that many a man acts with regard to a crumpled fender as though it were a personal violence to himself. The opposite is also true. Sometimes the phenomenal self may be defined in such a way as to exclude a portion of the body as when circulation in the foot or fingers is cut off. This latter aspect is illustrated in the case of a young woman who applied to one of the authors for graduate work in psychology. Noting that she was very badly crippled, he asked if she had considered the degree to which her handicap might make things difficult for her. "I don't have a handicap!" she snapped. Clearly she so defined her "self" as to ignore her crippled legs. In some cases the phenomenal self may even be located outside the body. Bettelheim (22), for ex-

ample, tells of instances of alienation of the self from the body during torture in the prison compound of Dachau. This effect may also be observed in hypnotized subjects who are subjected to pain-inducing experiences but do not feel pain, apparently because the pain is relegated to the not-self. Since it does not affect the self, it is not experienced.

#### THE PHENOMENAL SELF DEFINED

The phenomenal self, however, includes far more than the physical aspects of self. Evaluations and definitions of self as strong, honest, good-humored, sophisticated, just, guilty, and a thousand other ideas about self may be a part of the phenomenal self of a particular individual. We shall even discover later that the phenomenal self may include, by identification, persons and objects quite outside our physical selves entirely. For instance, we are quite likely to react to attacks upon our sons, daughters, wives, husbands, or parents as though these were attacks upon ourselves. Indeed, for all practical purposes they are. Seen in this light the old saying "Love me; love my dog" contains more truth than fiction. In short, the phenomenal self includes not only our physical selves but all those things we describe as "me."

It will be recalled that we have defined the phenomenal field as the universe, including himself, as it appears to the individual at the moment. Although behavior is always determined by the total phenomenal field, that portion of the field which the individual regards as part or characteristic of himself influences by far the majority of his behaviors. Since behavior is always a function of need satisfaction, it always has a personal reference in the phenomenal field. Those aspects of the phenomenal field having a specific reference to self, therefore, will be of paramount importance in understanding the individual's field and hence his behavior. Actually, of course, the phenomenal self is not an entity. Rather, it is a pure abstraction created for convenience and understanding. Such a concept is extremely useful in focusing attention upon those aspects of the field of particular importance in understanding behavior, while at the same time making it possible to exclude many aspects of minor importance. We might

define this concept as follows: *The phenomenal self includes all those parts of the phenomenal field which the individual experiences as part or characteristic of himself.*

#### THE BASIC HUMAN NEED

From birth to death the defense of the phenomenal self is the most pressing, most crucial, if not the only task of existence. Moreover, since human beings are conscious of the future, their needs extend into the future as well, and they strive to preserve not only the self as it exists but to build it up and to strengthen it against the future of which they are aware. We might combine these two aspects into a formal definition of the basic human need as: *the preservation and enhancement of the phenomenal self.*

Seen in this light it is possible to understand much of human behavior previously contradictory. Even such odd behavior as the wearing of gaudy clothing, speeding, arguing with the police, Goering's desire to assume all blame in the Nuremberg trials, or going over Niagara Falls in a barrel become not only understandable, but even, if given enough information, can become completely and accurately predictable. When each act is seen as an attempt to preserve or to fortify the individual's concept of himself, behavior becomes meaningful. Far from being inconsistent, behavior becomes characterized by complete predictability. The superiority of this frame of reference is particularly obvious in the interpretations the clinical psychologist is called upon to make. Note how the phenomenological point of view helps to clarify behavior in the following summary of a "typical" clinic case.

Jimmy Allen, an only child of eight years, is brought to the psychological clinic by his parents at the insistence of his teachers. The parents are much incensed and regard all this as a direct insult to the family. They raise a thousand complaints against the school and are completely at a loss to understand the situation. Jimmy, they tell us, is a delightful child at home. He has his moments now and then, but on the whole he is his Mother's and Daddy's darling, the center of a comfortable suburban home. Jimmy plays with a group of younger children whom he completely dominates much to the delight



of his father. His slightest wish is his parent's command. His manners are delightful with adults and he speaks like a polished young gentleman. With the adults at the clinic, he is calm, poised and helpful, too helpful for a child of eight. The parents feel the school must be a very terrible place for they point out that Jimmy just hates to go there and cries and begs to stay home. He has even made himself sick over it and had to stay home because he got so upset.

The report from the school on Jimmy presents a vastly different picture. His teachers complain that he is "not bright," stubborn, and a "very nasty child." He does not get along well with the other children, beats up the younger ones, and buys off the older ones with lollipops and licorice shoestrings from the store across the street. In class he is constantly talking and showing off. He must always be the center of attention. He likes art work and this is the only thing he does well. Whenever his work is displayed, he brags insufferably. He has been known to cheat on exams. When he lost the lead in the play recently, he skipped school for three days in a row. With forty children in class, the teacher is at wits' end to know what to do with him.

Jimmy joined the local Y, went four times and never ~~went~~ back again. The boys' work director says Jimmy never got along with any of the boys, stuck to the director "like molasses" and only wanted to swim. He refused to go to gym classes and stayed out of clubs entirely. He was an excellent swimmer, however, and enjoyed this sport immensely until the day he was sent home for holding two younger boys under. He hasn't been back since.

When we see this child as he sees himself, his behavior becomes understandable. While we might analyze his behavior in terms of many specific needs all these become a function of the one dominant aspect—the need to protect and to enhance his own self-concept.

Thus Jimmy has developed at home a concept of himself as being very important, as indeed he is, to his parents. He feels completely adequate, loved, wanted and safe. His every wish is granted by indulgent parents who in no sense deny his concept of himself. When he moves from this sheltered atmosphere, however, to the wider world of school and community his associates do not react to him in any

such light. They are unwilling to accept him at his value of himself. On the contrary they are not even aware of the values he places on himself but react to Jimmy in terms of his behavior. All this must be very puzzling to him. Since his concept of himself is not accepted by his associates he is forced to defend himself, and this he does by "stubbornness," being nasty, and cheating on exams. In his attempts to gain what he feels is his rightful due he buys off the older boys and beats up the younger ones, he sticks close to the director of the Y and, of course, brags of his accomplishments and enjoys what he can do well.

A delight at home to his parents, a nuisance away in the community; his need for self-esteem surfeited at home, opposed in the community—seen in this way, Jimmy's behavior becomes consistent. Indeed, given enough information about a new situation, his behavior can be accurately predicted.

#### ONLY ONE NEED

Even such apparently diverse tendencies in the individual as a desire for self-preservation and death, are only necessary because we observe these conflicting behaviors from a frame of reference which is inadequate to cover such behaviors under a single heading. This is well illustrated in the following excerpt from a counseling record with a young man in the depths of despair:

S: I don't know what I would do. I've thought about hanging myself, sometimes. It's an awful thing. It's entered my mind several times.

C: That scared you pretty much.

S: I often wonder what people would think if I did.

C: You find this not satisfactory either.

S: It doesn't accomplish anything. I suppose if a fellow got low enough, he'd have the guts.

C: It scares you a bit that you've thought of that kind of out.

S: To the point, sometimes, where I couldn't read a book on sociology. Sometimes I've thought, too, of going away—but *that's a kind of quitting, too. I don't like to be a quitter.*<sup>3</sup>

In this example from counseling, it is clear that even the question of suicide is not simply a function of a death wish in operation, or

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this book whenever illustrations from counseling cases are used, S stands for the subject or client; C, for the counselor.

this man would have committed suicide, for certainly, at this moment, the rest of his picture looked deeply depressing. Note, however, that the client rejected this possible solution, not because of the opposition of a desire for self-preservation, but rather because he is concerned about "What people think" if he committed suicide. Even suicide does not remove the individual from the necessity of maintaining and enhancing his phenomenal self.

The soldier in wartime is not torn between a desire for self-destruction and a desire for self-preservation as he faces the coming battle. On the contrary, he is concerned solely with the preservation or enhancement of his phenomenal self. Although the situation will vary from individual to individual, it might roughly be described as follows: He may risk death on the one hand to *preserve* his phenomenal self against becoming the kind of person who "lets his buddies down" and on the other hand to *enhance* his phenomenal self by being the kind of person who is "one of the gang," or as brave as the rest.

#### BEHAVIOR AS NEED SATISFACTION

##### THE PHYSICAL SATISFACTION OF NEED

Although it is possible that an individual may seek to preserve his phenomenal self through suicide, for most of us, the first essential for preserving the self is to remain alive and kicking. As a result we expend a great deal of time and energy in the attempt to keep our physical selves intact. We seek water, food, air; we rest, we eliminate waste materials and attempt to keep our body temperatures constant. These are the physical expressions of need in operation. When the satisfaction of these needs is seriously interfered with, our attention to their satisfaction becomes very great, and the amount of energy we expend may represent all that is at our command. Indeed, our field may even become restricted to such an extent that little else matters beyond the attempt to satisfy such needs. Good examples of this may be observed in the reports of the behavior of some populations in Europe following the war. Under the stress of hunger, the ordinary social controls upon behavior often melted away even among those

portions of the population previously having high moral standards. Experiments in controlled starvation demonstrate this narrowing of the field very clearly. Subjects report being unable to think of anything but food, of dropping all ordinary pursuits and interests to devote attention to cookbooks, devising fantasy meals, and the like. At the same time, under such experimental conditions, subjects may be observed to hoard their energies and carefully consider ways of movement involving the least possible expenditure of energy (174, 175).

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL NEED SATISFACTION

The preservation of the physical self is not an end in itself. It is but a goal which serves to make possible the more fundamental need of the individual to maintain or enhance his phenomenal self—the self of which he is aware. What is more, for most people in our society the physical satisfaction of need is far less impelling than the psychological aspects of need satisfaction. It is, after all, rather rare in this country, at least, that persons starve, freeze to death, are asphyxiated, or die for lack of sleep. The problems that concern us are not problems of keeping our body temperatures constant, or getting something to eat. Rather, the problems we face are those of providing *adequate* housing, *adequate* clothing, and *adequate* food. What we deem adequate in our culture is considerably more than that needed for bare existence alone. A cave would do about as well as a luxurious apartment in keeping body temperature constant. No one in his right mind, however, would suggest that we all go house hunting at once for a snug little cave in a hillside.

Most persons in our society find their greatest problems not in keeping physically alive but in enhancing their phenomenal selves. For most of us clothing is purchased more for its contribution to our own self-esteem than for keeping us warm or cool. In the summertime one needs but look at the average man sweltering in his archaic and uncomfortable costume of shirt, tie, and vest to recognize that his behavior is hardly motivated by the desire to keep cool. Nor is the rise and fall of the hem line in women's clothing to be accounted for by yearly changes in climate. It is difficult to find words in common

usage to describe the full force of this need for superiority, power, prestige, self-worth, self-respect, self-realization, and many others. Perhaps, in commonly understood terms a need for self-esteem comes closest to this enhancement aspect of the fundamental need we have described. The efforts of the individual to maintain and enhance his phenomenal self or to achieve self-esteem are expressed in his behavior, in the goals he attempts to reach, and the techniques he uses to reach them.

### THE FUNCTION OF GOALS IN NEED SATISFACTION

#### THE DIFFERENTIATION OF GOALS

In the course of his growth and development certain aspects of the human organism's phenomenal field become differentiated from the remainder of the field more or less permanently because they satisfy need (178). Thus certain objects, feelings, or attitudes become goals, the achievement of which satisfy the basic need of the individual to maintain or enhance his phenomenal self. At first, it is probable that the newborn infant is completely without goals beyond the extremely undifferentiated one of maintaining organization. With the passage of time, however, and the differentiation out of the field of certain objects, persons, sounds, etc. which accompany the satisfaction of the basic need, goals become more and more clearly differentiated. This goal differentiation is interestingly illustrated in the use of the word "Daddy" by the young son of one of the authors. The child's first use of this word was greeted in his family with much pride in his accomplishment until it was discovered that thunder arriving at mealtime was also "Daddy" to him. Apparently he had differentiated the word from the speech matrix as meaning an undifferentiated sound of which his father was but one producer. In similar fashion other goals of the child become differentiated in the course of time with developing satisfactions from food, water, persons, toys, and the like. Even the concept of "Mother" is not exempt from this process, as many a heartbroken mother can attest after leaving her infant for a week or two and returning to find the child "does not even recognize his own mother." It is likely that specific persons as father, mother, sister,

aunt, or grandma with the special meanings which our society attaches to them take considerable time to differentiate.

In the course of such differentiation of the child's goals from the remainder of the phenomenal field, it is apparent that not all children will develop the same patterns. In fact, the opportunities and circumstances of growth present so vast a number of possibilities for differentiation that it is unlikely that any two individuals ever have identical goals although their basic need is the same. Thus, one child may differentiate a goal of "bed" as a source of security, while another may come to differentiate the same object as a place to play, to have a bowel movement, to be fed, or as a place of punishment.<sup>4</sup>

#### HOW DIFFERENT GOALS ARISE

Where two children appear to have the same goals, it will probably be discovered on further examination that wide differences exist in such goals. In identical situations there cannot be identical goals for different children because each one sees that situation from his own unique point of vantage. Even for identical twins in apparently identical situations this is true, for a moment's reflection will make it clear that each twin is a unique part of the other's environment.

Living in the midst of a particular family group the child will adopt the goals of those who are important in satisfying his need and may

<sup>4</sup>In the same physical situation different people seek different goals at different times. As a consequence the non-personal psychologist is unable to explain behavior on the basis of external goals alone, since the number of possible externally observed goals in any situation is almost unlimited. The infant who has a bowl of cereal set before him for the first time may push it to the floor, smear it in his hair, splash it with his hands, or behave in countless other ways. The problem of motivation thus becomes a problem of why this direction is chosen in preference to that. This can only be handled in the non-personal frame of reference by supposing that the differences in choice of goals are due to such changes within the physical organism as drives, physiologic tensions, appetites, and the like. To do anything else is to deny the entire external framework. Need, for the externalist, must be organic change. Those needs such as hunger, sex, thirst, and the like he finds comparatively simple to define as "physiologic tensions," due to muscle contractions, glandular changes, osmotic pressure decreases, etc. With psychological needs, so-called because they do not fit into a physiologic framework, he has more difficulty and is forced to interpret them as beginning from some physiologic tension modified by the environment and changed by this impact through the operation of the "laws of learning." In this way, the need to be attractive may, (almost must) be explained as being in some manner a function of the sex drive.

become a Republican, a Methodist, an outdoorsman, or a gypsy, depending upon what is important to those about him. This process of differentiating goals similar (but not entirely so) to the group in which the individual moves gives a certain degree of continuity and similarity of goals among the various representatives of the same culture.

#### THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PHENOMENAL SELF AND GOALS

The organization of the phenomenal self has a very important effect on the process of the differentiation of goals of the child and adult. Through the selective effect it has upon perception certain aspects of a situation are likely to be selected as goals by one individual that would be completely overlooked by another. Thus, depending upon the concept of self, a car might appear to the delinquent as something to "swipe," to the factory worker as something to own, to the child as the means of getting to the zoo, and to the housewife as a mark of prestige. Each perceives the same object as a different kind of goal in terms of its peculiar reference to himself and his need at the moment.<sup>5</sup>

It is probable that very little of human behavior is the result of direct movement toward goals but rather that it moves through a series of subgoals to reach its major end of need satisfaction. If crossing the street to a friend's home becomes a goal for us, we cannot accomplish this without the achievement of certain subgoals in the process. For example, it may be necessary for us to descend the stairs, open the door, reach the curb, avoid a car, etc.

#### PERSISTENCE OF GOALS

When goals have been differentiated and have served to aid the individual to the satisfaction of the fundamental need they tend to persist as a part of the field organization of that individual. The degree of persistence shown by such goals is likely furthermore to be

<sup>5</sup> It will be noted that we have not spoken of needs in this discussion but only of one basic need. What is ordinarily meant by needs for most authors is treated here as a function of goals or techniques. Thus such needs as to be attractive, to be married, to achieve recognition, and the like are, in reality but descriptions of goals, the achievement of which satisfy the fundamental need of the individual in the maintenance or enhancement of the phenomenal self.

a function of the degree of differentiation it represents from the remainder of the field. The more the achievement of the goal serves to bring the organism to the satisfaction of the basic need, the greater its differentiation is likely to be from the remainder of the field, and the more likely it is to appear as a goal on future occasions. Almost any parent is familiar with the changes in an infant's behavior when it has been left with grandmother for a week. On his return to his family he may have acquired new goals which he has learned bring about satisfaction when used with "grandma." With the return to his own home these persist or disappear, depending upon whether they get results at home or not. The more strongly such goals lead to satisfaction of the fundamental need, the greater is the differentiation from the remainder of the field, and the greater is the likelihood of its persistence. Once such differentiation has been made, the inertia of the field organization tends to maintain that goal as a part of the field, and this adds to the likelihood of persistence of the goal.

#### NEGATIVE GOALS

It should be noted that we have not implied that the persistence of goals is necessarily a function of repetition; rather, it is a function of the degree of differentiation from the field, which in turn is affected by the degree of satisfaction of the fundamental need. This is particularly well illustrated in connection with negative goals. Negative goals, or goals which become differentiated in the field as objects to avoid, threaten the total organization of the individual. His need, however, is to maintain his phenomenal self. Hence such threats are sometimes strongly differentiated—so strongly differentiated in fact, that often a frightening object may be experienced only once but avoided ever after. This is frequently to be observed in childhood fears which persist far into adult life and may continue for the entire life span.

#### THE FUNCTION OF TECHNIQUES IN NEED SATISFACTION

##### THE DIFFERENTIATION OF TECHNIQUES

In the course of the growth of the child, techniques are also developed which make it possible for the individual to reach the goals he



has previously differentiated. Techniques are methods of reaching goals and thus satisfying need. Like goals, their fundamental aim is in the maintenance or enhancement of self. Most people have characteristic ways of achieving their ends. One person may characteristically placate people and win their good will by flattery; another may seek to attain self-assurance by dominating and criticizing others. Our friends can usually recognize and identify the particular techniques that we are most apt to use—witness the slang phrase, "*He would!*" Since behavior is usually best described in terms of its path, techniques are usually described in terms of the goals or the subgoals which they involve. For instance, reading, drinking, or movie going are typical techniques of escape from feelings of inadequacy, and the people who use them have as goals the acquisition of certain types of books, of liquor, or attendance at movies.

Such techniques become differentiated in the total phenomenal field of the individual in the same manner as we have described for the differentiation of goals. At first they may be extremely generalized in nature but with the passage of time tend to become more and more refined. In any case, they are always the result of the individual's striving for need satisfaction. Thus, the young child who feels extremely frustrated by someone and desires revenge or mastery over the object of his frustration, may at first be openly aggressive, fighting, kicking, and laying about him generally. With the passage of time and as he discovers that this technique does not bring real satisfaction of his need due to the violent reaction of others, he may come to differentiate a technique of attack upon a verbal level of open aggression in which he may tattle, or call the object of his aggression names. Since even this behavior is likely to bring censure upon him and result in less satisfaction of his need, he may learn to modify his techniques still further, whereupon he may discover that the same end may be accomplished through gossip or undercover slander of his tormentor. Eventually he may even be able to subtly get others to do what he wishes while he remains in the background.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> It will be noted we have not implied that these techniques are habits. Habit is a term used by the objective psychologist and implies the use of a technique without a necessary goal. This would seem to suggest that habits may eventually develop a motivating force of their own, quite divorced from

## RELATIONSHIP OF THE PHENOMENAL SELF AND TECHNIQUES

Like goals, techniques when differentiated become an integral part of the organization of the individual's phenomenal field and are subject to the primary forces in its operation. We have already seen how this organization tends to persist and techniques, as a part of the field, likewise persist. They become more or less fixed as a part of the phenomenal field, depending upon the degree to which they contribute to the satisfaction of the basic need of the individual. Once differentiated, furthermore, they tend to remain as a part of the fundamental organization. Like goals, they, too, may also become differentiated as a major function of the phenomenal self, in which case they contribute to their own maintenance through the selective effect which the phenomenal self imposes upon perception. Thus certain techniques of reaching goals may become characteristic ways of behaving for the individual depending upon his unique concept of himself. For instance, the child who has developed a way of regarding himself, let us say as a "tough guy" tends to act in accord with this concept and is likely to meet many situations in an aggressive manner even when this may lead to less ultimate satisfaction for him. It becomes what he considers to be the appropriate method of arrival at his goals for such a person as he conceives himself to be. Often the "radical" adopts certain kinds of behavior as appropriate for such a person and he may shun conformity in any instance. The pastimes and amusements of ordinary people are inconsistent with his belief

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the satisfaction of any need and unrelated to the accomplishment of any goal. To see behavior in such a light implies that behavior may exist without meaning. We have postulated as the foundation of phenomenological theory that behavior is characterized by lawfulness and hence must have meaning. It is clear that without meaning, behavior becomes impossible of prediction. Whatever behavior exists must be goal directed. The man or woman who develops a technique of smoking may do so, in the beginning, because it makes him feel more comfortable in a group where everyone else is smoking, or because it gives him something to do with his hands, or because it gives him a feeling of nonchalance, or for a hundred other reasons. Later on, however, he does not continue to smoke even when no one is about simply because he has a habit which has developed its own motive power, but rather, he does so because the technique has become differentiated, as a means to achieving some goal important to himself, or because certain physiologic states may be produced by smoking which enhance the phenomenal self.

about himself and must be rejected in favor of behavior which he feels is more sophisticated.

#### NEGATIVE TECHNIQUES

In the course of his development, each of us comes to differentiate both positive and negative techniques and to utilize or avoid such techniques, depending upon whether or not they lead to the satisfaction of the basic need. In this way the child who has been subjected to extremely severe punishment administered consistently over a period of time may differentiate techniques for reaching his goals by meekness or fawning, attention-getting devices while, at the same time, differentiating aggressive tactics as techniques to be avoided at all cost because they result in behavior on the part of others which threatens the phenomenal self. Such techniques may, furthermore, become an integral part of the individual's field organization with or without repetition. While the majority of techniques probably become differentiated with repeated behavior, they are not a direct result of repetition. Indeed, they may become effectively differentiated with no repetition whatever. In traumatic situations, for example, a single incident may result in a relatively fixed differentiation.

#### CONSISTENCY OF TECHNIQUES

In everyday life many people utilize the same techniques to arrive at many different goals. The "go-getter" may find aggressive techniques so useful in satisfying his needs that he applies them almost indiscriminately to every activity. He runs down his business rivals, dashes from place to place, hangs a "Do it now" sign in his office, bids wildly in his bridge, and may even apply such techniques to his courtship as he attempts to "sweep her off her feet." Still another person may find a technique of suppression best leads to the satisfaction of need; he may literally "swallow his pride" although he is "seething within." The opposite aspect of the relationship of goals and techniques may also be possible wherein an individual may utilize differing techniques to arrive at the same goals. In this instance, the woman seeking to build up her self-esteem may gossip about her neighbor, buy herself a new dress, powder her nose, strive for a career, or raise

ten children. For both goals and techniques the determining factor of persistence lies in the degree to which it is differentiated, either positively or negatively, with respect to need satisfaction in the total field. Those techniques or goals most clearly differentiated in the individual's field organization will tend to persist, while those less clearly differentiated will tend to give way to others more clearly figure in the total ground of the field.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF TECHNIQUES

In attempting to maintain and enhance the phenomenal self many techniques are differentiated in the course of our experience which lead more or less adequately to achieving this end. For the most part these are concerned with what the layman calls "boosting self-esteem" which is another way of expressing the enhancement of the phenomenal self. For practical purposes it is convenient to classify such behavior in a number of categories. It should be recalled in any such classification, however, that there are probably no pure cases of the use of any of these techniques. If behavior is seen from the phenomenological point of view as an attempt by the organism to maintain and enhance his phenomenal self or to achieve self-esteem, such techniques can be roughly divided into three major categories:

1. By mastery over people or things.
2. By identification with a powerful individual or membership in a potent group.
3. Through bringing about some physical change in the body organization.

#### NEED SATISFACTION BY MASTERY OVER PEOPLE

##### THE USE OF FORCE

Among the techniques of achieving mastery may be found all manner of devices, ranging from the completely obvious at one extreme to those techniques at the other so subtle as to pass unnoticed by the ordinary observer. Among the most primitive of such techniques is, of course, the use of physical force. Beating people with a club to gain mastery is by no means gone from our society, and

although our methods are often more refined, the essential principle still exists. Direct aggression or the wielding of superior force is still a major means of achieving mastery for many individuals. Although physical size is no longer so important for mastery as it once was in an adult society, the clenched fist is still a favorite technique of many for achieving their fundamental goals, even though it may appear in such disguised forms as legal devices, social position, employer-employee relationships, or on the basis of presumed superiority of knowledge as in teacher-pupil relationships. The principle is the same, and the force still compels though the club has given place to more genteel devices. Coercion achieves its end even though it may appear in verbal or other symbolic dress.

Almost anyone after failing to achieve his ends by more subtle means will explode in a fury of anger. And this is true of nations as well as individuals, when force of arms is necessary to achieve the goals which diplomatic pressure has failed to gain. From the social point of view this use of direct aggression is a peculiarly bad technique because it sets up a whole chain of aggressive reactions in which each victim attempts to forget his own humiliation by using his power to humiliate others. A man who has been humiliated at work may come home to bully his family, and his wife, to regain her lost self-esteem, may nag at him and the children, who, in turn, seek self-enhancement by aggressive behavior in the neighborhood.

#### SYMBOLIC TECHNIQUES OF FORCE

Since our society, in order to maintain its own organization frowns upon the use of direct aggression in a physical sense by its members, the child, in the course of his growth, may acquire techniques of a symbolic nature quite as effective as those of the more primitive type. These symbolic aggressions are frequent in clinical practice. For example, one little girl, being brought up by her mother to be a "little lady," was referred to a clinic for continually wetting her bed. The child had talked the matter over with her mother and agreed that one of the things she might do would be to refrain from drinking water after four in the afternoon. The following conversation with the family cook that same evening is highly revealing:

Child: (*coming into the kitchen*) Elsie, what do you suppose would happen if I were to drink four glasses of water after supper?

Elsie: Oh My! Why I suppose you'd wet your bed.

Child: (*vainly trying to suppress her delight*) Oh dear! That's just what I did!

Apparently this child had learned to utilize bed wetting as an aggressive technique against her mother. It is a common observation that such aggressions are often expressed in play. A large part of a child's time in play therapy may be spent in such symbolic activities as breaking balloons, playing "accident," knocking down block houses, urinating on the floor, or making clay figures of mother and father to be smashed to bits, or flushed down the toilet.

While adult symbolic aggressions are less obvious than those of the child, they are often effective nevertheless. Such veiled techniques as gossiping, whispering campaigns, excessive blame, or even "constructive" criticism may fool the average observer but should not deceive the psychologist. If people cannot satisfy their needs by one technique they must turn to others that will. There are a great many ways of enjoying mastery over others more or less disguised and often not only accepted in society but encouraged. Games of all kinds are primarily played to give the participants and their supporters an opportunity to enhance the phenomenal self by defeating worthy opposition. Ordinary "polite" conversation is often a situation where the speaker is building up his self-concept by dominating the listener, and the listener is waiting for his opportunity to act as an authority. The humorist, Strickland Gilliland, once said "If you see one man talking to another on the street, it is not a conversation. The other fellow is just waiting to tell about his operation." As a rule, large informal gatherings break up into small conversational groups, where people do not have to wait so long for an opportunity to talk.

#### DEMONSTRATIONS OF SUPERIORITY

"Kidding," "ribbing," "hazing," and practical joking are further methods by which the individual may take advantage of a social situation to feel superior to a victim. Since it is essential that either the victim or the audience be important, ribbing, like gossip, is often

unconscious flattery and many young girls so understand it. Ostentatious spending and the making of gifts are other ways in which people find a sense of superiority or worth. Among the Indians of British Columbia, the most important way of acquiring such superiority was the public presentation of gifts that humiliated recipients were unable to repay. Families lived in destitution for years, and individuals sold themselves into slavery to secure the means of recovering their prestige by outdoing their enemies. This potlatch custom eventually became such a menace to the community that it had to be forbidden by the Canadian government, probably to the relief of all concerned.

Another interesting variation of the use of subtle aggression is often seen in clinical experience with the negative or dawdling child. This is a form of aggression put to effective use on a larger scale by Ghandi and his followers in India and has been used in our own country by labor in the strike and the slowdown in industrial disputes. In all of these cases the technique is useful to gain a feeling of power over those who would force one action or another on the individual or the group. The adoption of a negative "You can't make me do it" attitude is a potent means of regaining feelings of competence and independence.

Perhaps the most subtle and least recognized function of mastery in operation is to be observed in what is often termed "leadership." The leader is able by means of non-obvious techniques to gain mastery over the group, and to sway individuals to his way of thinking without their being aware of the techniques in use upon them. The skillful leader may thus be able to obtain mastery over the group by planting ideas in fertile ground, by selectively praising his fellow's ideas and, if he is a good leader, may even succeed in doing so while remaining completely in the background himself.

#### NEED SATISFACTION THROUGH MASTERY OF THINGS

Fortunately for the human race, domination of others is not the only way in which people may build up and reinforce their phenomenal selves. Another way of achieving power lies in the mastery of things. To achieve this end it is necessary that the individual have a feeling that he is able to do something, to have a power over his surroundings.

At all ages, but especially in childhood, the control may be destructive, as when young children enjoy themselves by banging on the kitchen pans or tearing up the family magazines. Much of the pleasure in building with blocks comes from the pleasure in knocking them down. But among adults too, such destructive attempts at mastery are not uncommon. Building contractors report that their men enjoy wrecking a building more than building one, probably because the destruction is faster and more spectacular, providing greater awareness of personal power. Many an adult remains a fire engine chaser long after childhood, and crockery-breaking booths are always popular at carnivals.

For most adults, however, it is probable that the greatest amount of mastery over things is gained from constructive behaviors. The engineer has a pride in his bridge, the architect in his building, and even Winston Churchill takes pride in garden walls built with his own labor. It is probable that the inexorable breakdown of jobs to more and more minute details in assembly line production has destroyed for many workers their opportunity for mastery over things possible in the production of a complete article by one's self. On the other hand, it is probably true that handling of giant machines in modern industry contributes to this feeling for some people. Many a man has probably not yet lost his secret desires to command the monstrous huffing-and-puffing railroad engine, so impressive in his youth.

#### NEED SATISFACTION BY IDENTIFICATION WITH OTHERS

The second group of techniques to maintain and enhance the phenomenal self is so universally used and is so different from the dominating techniques we have been discussing that some writers contend that it must be due to a completely independent motive, which they have called the need for social approval. For a number of years during infancy and childhood we are almost completely dependent upon adults for the satisfaction of our physical and psychological welfare. Children who win the good will and attention of adults are fed, clothed and comforted. Children who incur ill will are punished, ignored, or humiliated. As a consequence, the sympathy and good will



of other people are vitally necessary to every child, and much of this feeling of need for others survives into adult life. From a practical point of view, the adults in our present highly specialized economy are almost as dependent upon other people as are the children. But even if this were not true it is not likely that any adult who had had the normal experiences of childhood could fail to gain a feeling of security and self-assurance from the approval of the people he respects.

If the technique of seeking the approval of others were motivated, as many suppose, by an independent drive for social approval, then the approval of one person or group should be as satisfying as the approval of another. If, on the other hand, it is simply an alternative method for securing a consciousness of self-worth, then we should prefer the approval of the individual or membership in the group which seems to us to be important. There is evidence that this is the case. People often go long distances to see famous personages and thus identify themselves with success. The politician who said "if you can't lick 'em, join 'em" was simply expressing a common type of behavior. Even in times of peace, the less powerful members of a group tend to seek security by identifying themselves with a powerful group or dominant leader. While visiting Canadian mental hospitals a few years ago, one of the authors was impressed by the large numbers of patients who had identified themselves in one way or another with the United States and claimed to be American secret agents, relatives of the President, or to be receiving messages from the "hearts of the American people." No similar preoccupation with Canada is apparent among patients in American hospitals. In the United States such attempts at identification with a strong group or leader are by no means uncommon. We have recently seen our old people flocking to the banners of the Townsend Plan, and even more recently many returning servicemen find importance and comfort in the powerful veterans' organizations.

Individuals tend to seek self-esteem through winning the approval of groups or individuals they believe to be important but they tend also to withdraw from groups which no longer contribute to their feelings

of importance. It is a common observation that when an individual has achieved the highest office in an organization his ardor for the work of that group often rapidly disintegrates and he may soon have broken his relations completely.

#### NEED SATISFACTION THROUGH BODY CHANGE

A third major group of techniques seems to be that in which the individual seeks some form of bodily change which contributes to redefining his phenomenal self in a more favorable or less humiliating light. Often the excitement attendant upon thrills results in increased body tonus which is exhilarating to the individual and is likely to give a feeling of increased power and effectiveness. Such boosts to the self-esteem are often consciously sought and sometimes paid for in amusement parks, and the like. Indeed, in some people this feeling becomes almost a goal in life and much of their time is spent in a search for thrills. Gambling is a familiar example of this sort of device. In the excitement and anticipation of winning or losing, the gambler is able for the moment to forget his feelings of inadequacy and incompetence and gets a feeling of heightened tonus which is exhilarating and brings a feeling of power. Lotteries and policy games are most popular in the poorest sections of cities apparently because to many people they furnish the only hope of achieving property or power. Economically they cannot afford to gamble, but psychologically they cannot afford not to gamble.

Alcohol and drugs by changing the user's conception of the field and of himself also function as a means of achieving a physical condition which enhances the phenomenal self. With the use of such narcotics the individual becomes less aware of reality as his ability to perceive accurately becomes less and less. Unaware of the objective situation he is no longer faced with the distasteful fact that he is not what he believes himself to be. In complete stupor, he has escaped such reality entirely. With certain drugs which produce dreaming, he may not only escape the reality which threatens his self-concept but may even be able to add positive aspects of pleasant dreams in which he may be whatever he desires. It is a common observation that light "social drinking" helps to loosen the tongues of a party and to make

guests more at ease especially when they are new to each other. As the drinkers become less able to perceive the reactions of others and experience a deadening of awareness of some of the bodily reactions, their tongues become less inhibited and the feeling tone of all is enhanced.

## ⌘ CHAPTER V ⌘

### *The Way We See Ourselves*

THE most important differentiation or complex of differentiations in the individual's phenomenal field is the development of his phenomenal self. What a person does and how he behaves are determined by the concept he has of himself and his abilities. If a man thinks he is Napoleon, he will act like Napoleon; at least like his concept of Napoleon.

The phenomenal self is the most permanent part of the individual's phenomenal field and is the point of reference for his every behavior. The basic need of everyone is to preserve and enhance the phenomenal self, and the characteristics of all parts of the field are governed by this need. The phenomenal self is so important in the economy of the individual that it gives continuity and consistency to his behavior. When the phenomenal self is understood, various and diverse behaviors become consistent, controllable and predictable. Most people conceive of themselves as law abiding, as citizens, and as assets to the community. It is very fortunate they do. Can one conceive of the chaos which would result if there were no such consistent factors in personality? Whether we have come to think of ourselves as being competent or incompetent, attractive or repulsive, honest or dishonest, has a tremendous effect on our behavior in different situations.

#### NATURE OF THE PHENOMENAL SELF

In the previous chapter we have defined the phenomenal self as including all those aspects of the phenomenal field which the individual experiences as part or characteristic of himself. Although we speak of the phenomenal self in the singular it should not be supposed that the phenomenal self is a unit function. Rather, it is what Raimy has called

an exceedingly "complex function."<sup>1</sup> It is composed of all the meanings which the individual has about himself and his relation to the world around him. Arising from all of the experiences of the individual, it must of course be defined in many exceedingly complex and intricate ways. From an external point of view, the widely diverse behavior to which this complexity leads is likely to cause the observer to feel that there is little or no consistency to the behavior he observes. It is the thesis of this book that this is only true when we observe behavior objectively. When we understand behavior from the point of view of the behavior it becomes clear that he is not acting inconsistently. Far from it. Although the phenomenal self is complex it is by no means disorganized. Rather, it is a highly organized function which operates in consistent and predictable fashion. Mr. Smith may conceive of himself, for example, as taller than his wife, a better golfer than Ed, a great man with the ladies, a poor hand at figures, a man who likes his dinner on time, or any other of a thousand similar definitions of himself. All of these, however, are an integrated pattern which make up a unique, organized human being known to himself as "I." The activities which result from such a phenomenal self may represent varied and puzzling behaviors, but do so only when we fail to see Mr. Smith in terms of his own concept of himself.

#### THE INDIVIDUAL'S FRAME OF REFERENCE

The phenomenal self is the only frame of reference which the individual possesses. It is the only self he knows. Whether other persons would agree to his self-definitions or not, the phenomenal self has the feeling of complete reality to the individual. Wherever he is, whatever he does, the maintenance and enhancement of this self is the prime objective of his existence.

For most of us the phenomenal self is an extremely stable organiza-

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the best and most extensive statement of a theory of the self-concept to date is that presented by Raimy (1954) in his doctoral dissertation. He postulates three basic principles with respect to the self-concept

1. The self-concept is a learned perceptual system which functions as an object in the perceptual field.
2. The self-concept not only influences behavior but is itself altered and restructured by behavior and unsatisfied needs.
3. It may have little or no relation to external reality.

tion as well. Anyone who has ever attempted to rebuild a child's feeling of competence, once he has developed a concept of himself as incompetent and inadequate, can testify to the difficulty of bringing about such changes. Ordinarily it is only upon repetition of many experiences of adequacy and with much praise and encouragement that such a shift in the self concept becomes possible. Even in the traumatic situation of the man who has lost a leg in an accident or in battle, the redefinition of the phenomenal self to exclude that lost member often requires an extended period and in some cases may never occur at all.

A young teacher with severe feelings of inferiority reports in a counseling situation:

S: You know I teach classes in all four forms in our school. I get along fine with the first formers and I do a good job of teaching too. I like it, but it gets me how, as the day goes on, I get worse and worse, and so nervous by the end of the day that I make a terrible mess of it by the last period. I'm scared—scared that the principal will walk into that last period class of mine some day. I can handle those young ones but the older ones get me and they know it—I'm sure of it! In the morning I have the first and second formers and the afternoon the upper forms, the third year first, and then the fourth.

C: The older they get, the more scared you feel.

S: That's it, that's it! I never thought of it like that before. Why sure—I can get away with it with the little kids but those big ones. . . .

From his own report this young man has indicated how his feeling of competence affects his behavior. Feeling competent with the younger groups, he acts competently. The older the children get and the more closely they approach himself in size and ability the less competent he feels and the poorer job he does. He appears to conceive of himself as adequate with children but not with adults. The closer his pupils approach adult status, the more inadequate he feels and behaves.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHENOMENAL SELF

#### EARLY EFFECTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHENOMENAL SELF

Although it is probable that some sort of field exists for the infant prior to birth, we can only speculate as to its nature.<sup>2</sup> For all practical

<sup>2</sup> It seems plausible that the phenomenal field prior to birth is probably differentiated very largely in terms of touch in so far as the external world

purposes we can begin our examination of the development of the phenomenal self with the birth of the child into the world of which he is going to become a part. It seems likely that James' description of the child as existing in a "blooming, buzzing confusion" is a highly realistic description of the field of the newborn infant. As the infant is plunged suddenly into a world of sight, sound, taste, smell, and feeling, differentiation is at first a hazy matter. Only the most intense stimuli elicit responses from him. As time passes more precise differentiations become possible and in the first few hours after birth the amount of stimulation necessary to bring forth a response may be observed to decrease rapidly (191, 150, 53, 55, 77). With sharper differentiation within the field the behavior shown by the child becomes increasingly well defined. Even from a strictly external approach to infant behavior, this differentiatinal characteristic of child development represents the most outstanding aspect of the child's growth. Practically all research in child development, from sucking, locomotion, or the Babinski reflex to the ultimate development of language, illustrates this trend from generalization to differentiation. As continuing differentiations are made, the various aspects of the child's phenomenal field become more distinct. While at first this occurs primarily in terms of physical functions and definitions, as the child grows older thousands of new demands are made to which he must respond in socially approved fashion. He must learn to use toilet facilities, to eat in the properly prescribed fashion, and generally to regulate his life in terms of the social demands which are made upon him.

From observation it would appear that among the earliest differentiations made by the infant in the definition of his field are those which are concerned with the separation of self from the rest of the field. It is probable that the characteristic delayed response of the neonate to various forms of stimulation may be ascribed to his failure to differentiate clearly between self and not self. It may be noted, too, that a very large proportion of the child's earliest manipulations are of a tactual, kinesthetic nature by which he appears to explore his

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is concerned. If this is true, we should expect that loss of support for the neonate would result in disorganized response which is exactly what experimental evidence indicates. Loss of support leads to a disorganized field. Since behavior is a function of the field, a disorganized field should result in disorganized behavior.

world. Eventually, such explorations result in a clearer and clearer differentiation between the physical self and the rest of the world. It seems likely that this differentiation of self from the field is never quite complete even in the mature adult.

#### CULTURAL EFFECTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHENOMENAL SELF

To this point we have spoken of the development of the phenomenal self only in terms of the child's reactions to his physical surroundings. As a matter of fact, the culture into which the individual is born is a far more potent factor in the development of the phenomenal self. While the child is born into a world of physical objects, even these are subjected to the particular interpretations of the culture so that the phenomenal self becomes overwhelmingly the product of the culture. For most of us, the phenomenal self we develop is a direct outgrowth of the culture matrix of our parents and early guardians.

The human infant is born into an existing society—a structured, more or less organized society, in which all individuals of whom it is composed are bent upon maintaining their own integrations. The cumulative needs of these individuals produce a society which maintains and enhances its organization. Such a society is not only responsive to the demands of its members, but also enforces upon its new members its own peculiar framework. Immediately at birth, if not before, this social pressure begins its work. From the very start socially acceptable differentiations are imposed upon the infant. Witness the fact that we present blue booties to the newborn boy and pink to the girl. Even the physical behaviors of the child are subject almost at once to social control. Babies may be fed on schedule, subjected to hospital routine, and very shortly are taught proper habits of elimination, eating, and sleeping by parents who are both products of the society and its unconscious agents.

From them we learn to define the world about us in terms of the culture into which we are born. We come to accept as our own reality the definitions of our experience and of those who most closely affect us. We apply the labels of our culture to our surroundings and accept what our society calls a tree as a tree, what it calls a house as a house, and so on through greater and greater differentiations to the definitions



in terms of which we move as adults. But not only do we accept the labels of our culture with respect to things and people around us. We accept also the values, taboos, and moral concepts of our culture, or subcultures as well. The meanings of these things become part of our own "reality." This cannot but affect the concept of self at which the individual arrives through the processes of which we have been speaking.

Out of the interaction of the child with the world about him, the individual comes to differentiate more and more clearly his phenomenal self (144, 145). Obviously, this concept can only be a function of the way he is treated by those who surround him. As he is loved or rejected, praised or punished, fails or is able to compete, he comes gradually to regard himself as important or unimportant, adequate or inadequate, handsome or ugly, honest or dishonest, and even to describe himself in the terms of those who surround him. The child can only see himself in terms of his experience, and in terms of the treatment he receives from those responsible for his development. He is likely, therefore, to be strongly affected by the labels which are applied to him by other people. The dangers of describing a child with this or that label become apparent at once. He may have no other choice but to regard himself in terms of such symbols. If the reactions of those who surround him label him as a liar, a thief, a delinquent, or a "dummy," he may eventually come to see himself in the same light. He can only act in terms of what he regards as the truth about himself. Since his phenomenal self is the result of his experience, his behavior can only be an outgrowth of the meaning of that experience and he must necessarily become in truth what he has been labelled by the community which surrounded him.<sup>3</sup>

#### STABILITY OF THE PHENOMENAL SELF

##### INERTIA OF THE ORGANIZATION

Dependent upon the circumstances of his growth and the intensity and satisfaction of his experiences, the individual's phenomenal self becomes more or less permanently fixed. Two factors appear to con-

<sup>3</sup> For a further discussion of the effect of society on the development of the self see (219, 138, 190).

tribute to this fixation. The first is the inertia of the organization itself. An organization or integration once established, tends to resist disruption. We have already pointed out the primary need of all organisms in the maintenance of their fundamental organization. Even the slightest threat to the organization is likely to be met by the organism with a mobilization of its defenses or a retreat from the menacing situation. This often becomes a very important problem in counseling when it is necessary to give the individual an interpretation of test scores, for example. So long as such results are consistent with his already differentiated concept of himself there is likely to be little difficulty of acceptance. The moment such results deviate very markedly from his concept of himself the counselor's difficulties begin.

It is interesting that even a self-concept in which the individual regards himself as very inadequate, stupid, or inept will often be defended to the last ditch. Almost anyone knows how difficult it is to convince the person with severe inferiority feelings of his true level of worth. He is likely to be pleased by praise, even highly embarrassed, but continues to act in the same old ways. Any college counselor is familiar with such people who, when told of a high score on a test, for example, profess that "there must be some mistake. That couldn't be me. Are you sure?"

Casual observation of the behavior of the same individual in various situations would lead one to believe that the phenomenal self undergoes wild and fluctuating changes in differing situations. Raimy (154) appears to hold to this thesis when he states: "One of the most important characteristics of the self-concept seems to be its exceedingly sensitive yielding to rapid restructuring if the conditions are sufficient, yet it may also remain unaltered under conditions which, to the external observer, are violent conditions of stress. The explanation of the phenomena is thought to lie in the fact that the self-concept functions under the same principles of perceptual reorganization as do other parts of the perceptual field." What seems like wild and fluctuating changes in the phenomenal self are in reality artifacts of the frame of reference from which they are observed.

For example, the overbearing foreman who browbeats, threatens, and curses his men may become a fawning, obsequious gentleman the

moment the plant supervisor appears on the scene. At first glance it would certainly appear that his phenomenal self has undergone a very decided shift in character. This appears true, however, only if we regard the matter objectively. From the point of view of the foreman himself his self-concept may have undergone no change whatever. Regarding himself as being of a level of competence, authority, ability, etc. greater than that of his men but far less than that of the plant supervisor his behavior in the two situations can be observed to be a natural and expected outgrowth of such a concept in either case, and there remains no necessity to infer any change in his phenomenal self in the two situations. To think of the phenomenal self being newly structured by every momentary situation would make any degree of consistency of behavior an impossibility.

#### SELECTION OF PERCEPTIONS

A second factor contributing to the stability of the phenomenal self, makes the likelihood of any great changes even more difficult once it has become established. This factor is the selection imposed upon the individual's perceptions by the phenomenal self. Once the phenomenal self has become established, experience therefore can only be interpreted in terms of that self. Thus all perceptions which are meaningful to the individual derive their meaning from the relation they bear to the phenomenal self already in existence. There are countless illustrations of this distortion imposed upon perceptions in everyday life. Almost any lecturer soon becomes hardened to the shock induced by the people who come to the platform and shake his hand exclaiming that what he had to say was "absolutely right." Experience teaches him not to press them further, for it is often very disillusioning to hear their version of his talk which they so greatly admired. It becomes the old story of "That's what you heard. It's not what I said." Almost anyone is familiar too, with the situation, we sometimes get into, where our insults are taken for compliments, and our compliments are taken as insults. The self-concepts we hold select our perceptions and bring them in line with the way we see ourselves. Piaget's work illustrates very clearly this selective effect of the self on perceptions (144, 145). Even in some scientific matters this selec-

tion is evident. The "intellectual," for example, attempts to observe life coolly and dispassionately. He attempts in other words to remove himself from life and thus renders himself ineffectual in life. The only personal reference remaining in his thinking is his possession of ideas. Since this is his organization he must protect it, and he ends by accepting only those beliefs already consistent with his own.

Obviously, this selective effect contributes to making the phenomenal self less likely of change, even if we do not consider the inertia to change at all. The woman who sees herself as misused and interprets all her experience in the light of that fact is not likely to change her position with any degree of readiness. So far as she is concerned, everything that happens to her is further proof of how right she was in the first place! In the same way, the child who feels rejected interprets his parents' mildest rebuke as further evidence to prove what he already thinks—his parents don't love him.

There is a wealth of objective evidence corroborating this selection of perception as well. Bruner and Goodman (25) found children from lower socio-economic groups judged a quarter significantly larger than did children from wealthier families. Frenkel-Brunswick (66) reports that her subjects omitted, justified, or completely reversed the facts when describing their own weaknesses. Coffin (33) concludes from his studies: "It is found that subjects accept in general those suggestions which 'fit' with their existing attitudes even when alternative suggestions are available, offered simultaneously and in similar manner." Levine and Murphy (110), working with Communist text materials, found pro-Communist sympathizers were not only able to memorize pro-Communist materials more readily than anti-Communist literature, but their recall was better for the same materials. With an anti-Communist group, exactly the opposite was true. Thus the very existence of the phenomenal self imposes a selective effect upon perception which makes change in the former difficult.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE PHENOMENAL SELF AND REALITY

The phenomenal self is the individual's own definition of his relationship to the world about him. For all of us the earliest definitions

<sup>4</sup>For additional review of research on this question, see G. W. Allport, the ego in contemporary psychology. *Psychol. Rev.*, 1943, 50, 451-478.

of this relationship appear to be in terms of the physical objects that surround us and the state of our bodies at any particular instant. It is probable that for most of the rest of the animal kingdom the definitions which make up the phenomenal self seldom go beyond this level of experience. For man, however, the differentiation of the phenomenal self in terms of the physical aspects of environment and bodily states represents but the bare beginning. Human beings are born into a culture and live in some sort of one the greater part, if not all, of their lives. It would be theoretically possible for one to develop a phenomenal self even if he existed entirely alone on a desert island. For practical purposes however, the culture in which we move is so completely and inextricably a part of our experience as to overshadow almost all else in determining the nature of the phenomenal self developed by each of its members. Even our definitions and values with respect to the purely physical aspects of our environment are not left entirely to our own experience but are colored, interpreted, and valued one way or another by the culture into which we are born, as they are interpreted to us by the acts of the people who surround us. Thus even the so-called "objective facts" which surround us are likely to be no more than the interpretations of the culture in which we are raised.

#### HOW COMMON MEANINGS OCCUR

One of the most intriguing aspects of the phenomenal self is its relationship to these "objective facts." If we return to philosophy, we may postulate that the only reality is "truth." Unfortunately, however, we can never know "absolute truth" for it is always distorted in perception. The only reality which exists for the individual is that of his current phenomenal field. What, then, are these "objective facts"?

We have seen in Chapter III that there is a considerable amount of overlap to the phenomenal fields of individuals particularly if they have been raised in the same or highly similar cultures. This area of overlap represents those meanings more or less common to a number of individuals and have the feeling of reality to them. It is upon the basis of these commonly experienced meanings that communication is possible and a common "reality" is established. These are the "facts"

existing for the members of any group.<sup>5</sup> The only "objective reality" is that which is agreed upon in a particular culture.

A moment's reflection will make it clear to the reader that this external reality may differ widely from culture to culture. What I call man, is *hombre* to the Spanish, *homme* to the French, or *inuk* to the Eskimo. The same is true of other objects as well. What they are called, what they are described as, and even their meanings may differ in different cultures. Certainly the American ideal of a "man" is far different from that of the Frenchman, the Spaniard, or the Eskimo. Fat girls are valued very differently in Cleveland or Istanbul and value themselves accordingly. What is accepted as fact in any culture is no more than what the majority of its important people believe to be true.

This often leads to some very interesting social paradoxes. Kinsey (98) has pointed out, for example, that in the upper social strata of our society sexual intercourse outside of marriage is much less common than in lower order groups, while masturbation in upper strata groups is far more common than in lower socio-economic levels. Since laws are made in the main by the upper socio-economic levels, however, standards of behavior are imposed upon the lower strata groups of our society, which are grossly out of touch with the "realities" of their behavior.

The external reality within which the individual operates has a very important bearing upon his behavior. Just the existence of an individual in any situation imposes demands upon him. The very physical aspects of one's environment require certain types and degrees of behavior if the individual is to survive. Immersed in water in the middle of the lake, the situation demands that I keep myself afloat in some fashion. When the temperature gets low in my living room, the situation demands that I do something to keep warm, and when my car is going too fast, the situation demands that I slow it down or expire. But it is not physical situations alone that make demands upon us. For most of us, social demands are far more frequent and pressing in daily life. A classroom situation imposes de-

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter XV for an explanation of the importance of this principle in the work of the physical sciences.

mands for behavior on both the teacher and his students. Similar demands are imposed upon the individual by his family, his friends, his community, his nation, in short, by every life situation with which he is faced. It is the unceasing attempt of the individual to achieve need satisfaction when confronted with the demands imposed upon him by external reality that produces the behavior we observe.

As the individual operates to maintain and enhance his phenomenal self many aspects of external reality will come to have meanings in his phenomenal field similar to those existing in external reality. This will be particularly true of the meanings of objects. In order to achieve maximum need satisfaction in any culture it will be necessary for the meanings of objects in that culture to have similar meanings for the individual. If similar meaning did not exist for him he could not communicate with his fellows and need satisfaction would be extremely difficult if not impossible. When one's house is on fire, to confuse the letter box with the fire alarm does not contribute to the maintenance of self. The meanings of objects existing in the culture are essential to need satisfaction of the individual. Such meanings in the culture will therefore come to have counterparts in his phenomenal field. This will be true as well of other meanings than objects. It will be equally true of the concepts, values, ideas, and other abstractions existing in the particular culture in which he is reared.

Even the phenomenal self developed by the individual will be found to have many elements of similarity with what other people think of him. The child who is surrounded by parents, teachers, and friends who regard him as adequate and capable comes in time to adopt as his own much of their definitions of himself. To regard himself as anything else would lead him into behavior unacceptable to his circle and he would be unlikely to reach his maximum need satisfaction.

#### HOW DIFFERENT MEANINGS ARISE

We need but look about us to observe that many persons have developed meanings about themselves quite different from the external reality in which they move. Such differences in meanings may be the result of (1) a change in the culture or (2) a change in the phenomenal self or both of these.

## CHANGE IN THE CULTURE

It must be remembered that the individual does not live in a single culture but in a whole series of cultures, at any moment. We might describe these as subcultures within a larger culture. At any moment we may be living in a family, a school, a community, a church, a state, a nation, or a world subculture. What is more, the demands made on the individual by these various subcultures may differ very widely. Since the individual may be raised in a subculture, within some larger culture, his phenomenal self may be a function of the subculture. When he moves from it into the larger group at some later date, his phenomenal self may no longer be consistent with the demands of the new group. For all practical purposes we may describe him as being out of touch with his external reality. His actions may continue to represent the outcome of his phenomenal self derived from the previous group and to him may appear completely adequate. To the new society his actions may appear to be "queer," "unusual," or even "quite daft," depending on how far they deviate from the expectations of the new social group. One of the authors remembers the old gentleman who had lived for years practically as a hermit, and who was invited to the family Thanksgiving dinner. To the children he was an object of curiosity in his old dress suit, but the old gentleman was quite unconscious of his odd appearance. When the gravy boat was passed, he disregarded the ladle and *poured* the gravy out much to the astonishment of this young child. Obviously he was doing what he considered in his day to have been both "right" and "proper." He was completely consistent with himself, and the culture he had known but out of place in the one he had entered. Other examples of this sort may be observed in the adjustments of immigrants to a new country.

This relationship of the phenomenal self to the expectations of others offers an explanation of the increasing conservatism and rigidity to change observable in the later years of life. Having formed his phenomenal self in earlier life the individual tends to maintain it. As life continues, the culture in the midst of which he lives undergoes changes. Thus, its demands become different while the phenomenal self may remain more or less static. This has the effect of separating



his behavior from the cultural demand and he is likely to feel threatened by new factors in culture. Under threat the *impulse* of the organism is to protect its organization and its concepts become more strongly defended than ever. The likelihood of any momentous changes in the phenomenal self while under such attack must be extremely remote. It is not surprising therefore that age brings greater rigidity since the very passage of time is likely to place the phenomenal self under threat.

#### CHANGE IN THE PHENOMENAL SELF

Personal meanings may also change very greatly from cultural expectation through a change in the phenomenal self. The teacher who has come to expect a particular behavior of a child may be quite bewildered by a sudden change in his behavior. The classroom situation may not have changed yet the child's behavior may become different because his concept of himself has changed. For example, in a certain school Peter had always been a very shy and retiring child who never raised problems for the teacher. He was quiet, orderly, and gentlemanly at all times. In fact, the child seemed to be repressed and almost fearful of those around him. From Peter's own point of view, he regarded himself as being unimportant and pretty much incapable of dealing with his fellows in class. As a result he took a back seat and showed very little "push." Peter had been subjected to a great deal of bullying by a group of boys in the neighborhood of whom he was in mortal terror. He was unused to combat and did not know how to defend himself. Whenever he could he scurried off home through back streets to avoid his constant tormenters. One day, however, the gang caught him. They pushed him around. They called him names till Peter was wailing in tears. Finally, the leader of the gang knocked him down and sat on his chest while the rest of the boys stood around and jeered. Peter was terrified. When the leader threatened to kill him Peter lashed out in desperation. He threw the leader off his stomach and in a frenzy of fear sailed into him. Much to his surprise he discovered himself beating up his tormenter while the gang that had been jeering at him a moment before was now yelling encouragement to his efforts. Having knocked the leader down in the

first rush of his terror, he now pounced upon him, grabbed him by the hair and beat his head on the ground. In a few moments the leader of the gang was sobbing with pain and begging to be let off. Peter let him go and was led from the field of battle, a hero. For months after, the gang, impressed with his ferocity, treated him with respect. But Peter's impression of himself changed too. He gained confidence in himself; he was looked up to and was no longer afraid. He became more active, got into more mischief and even went so far as to defy his teacher in front of his new-found friends. All this was puzzling to the teacher who was unaware of Peter's new status. Peter's concept of himself had changed while the school situation had not.

#### HOW THE PHENOMENAL SELF CHANGES

As Raimy has pointed out, "the self concept not only influences behavior but is itself altered and restructured by behavior and unsatisfied needs." To say that the phenomenal self resists change does not imply by any means that, once it is established, no further changes are possible. It is probable that throughout the lifetime of the individual change is constantly occurring in the phenomenal self as he perceives the reactions of others to himself. In a sense this is like learning about self from a mirror. He differentiates new aspects of self in terms of the reactions of those about him as they respond to his behavior.

#### AWARENESS OF DIFFERENCE

The relationship of the phenomenal self to the demands of the culture in which an individual moves has a very important bearing on changes in his phenomenal self. As we have seen, the phenomenal self, once established, tends to maintain itself through the activities of the organism in satisfying its need and through the selection imposed upon perception by the phenomenal self. We have suggested, also, that it is quite possible for change in the phenomenal self to occur as a result of the experience of the individual. Such changes appear to be dependent upon two major functions. The first of these is the individual's perception of a difference existing between the demands of the situation and his phenomenal self. He seems to perceive this

state of affairs as "doubt," as a vague feeling of tension, as a feeling that "something is wrong," or, more specifically, as a feeling of inadequacy or failure.

The ability to perceive the difference between the self that the situation requires, and the phenomenal self is dependent upon his ability to see himself as others see him (132). As a member of a particular group or culture and responding to the world of things and events about him, the individual interprets these events in the terms of his concept of the culture. Furthermore, since the culture responds to him as well as to other events, he participates in this observation of himself, and he becomes more or less able to "see himself as others see him." Thus, when one of the authors does not attend church on Sunday morning, he is aware of the fact that other people in his neighborhood look askance at such behavior. Similarly, the child as he grows older learns not only to behave in one way or another, but to evaluate his behavior in the terms of the culture in which he is reared. When he takes a piece of forbidden candy, he knows that his behavior is not acceptable. He not only behaves in a certain way but becomes able to interpret his behavior objectively, that is to say, in terms of the values of the culture in which he operates. This objective evaluation of his behavior in terms of the society in which he moves may or may not affect his concept of himself. For example, though he may evaluate his act to taking the candy as "stealing," he may continue to regard himself as a "good" boy. It is interesting that this is often exactly what seems to occur in many delinquents. Even though they may accept the label of "liar" or "thief" this acceptance is subject to the selective effect of the self-concept upon perception, and may be interpreted by the child as "smart" or "good."

Unless awareness of the discrepancy between the phenomenal self and cultural demand occurs, it is certain that the chances of change in the phenomenal self are very slight. Almost anyone is familiar with examples of such lack of insight in everyday life. We see illustrations of this in such common expressions as "Ye Gods! Can't he *see* what he's doing?" "You'd think he'd know better" and "Yeah! Just *try* and tell him." In such situations the individual's phenomenal self seems truly to have blinded him to the external evaluation of the facts.

There seems to be evidence that this ability to see oneself from the point of view of another develops somewhat later in the individual than his phenomenal self. It is necessarily dependent upon the differentiation of self from the rest of the field and probably arises only when the child begins to differentiate himself as a part of a group, and has developed the ability to put himself in another's place. Thus, at a very early age a child may come to have a concept of himself as important or unimportant, wanted or unwanted but can only make judgments about himself as others see him when he has developed sufficiently to become aware of attitudes and interpretations as others see them.

In spite of the fact that the individual possesses the ability to see himself as others do, even this is subject, in greater or less degree, to the selective effects of the phenomenal self. For example, in the illustration used above, the child who conceives of himself as good, but who has taken the forbidden candy may deny in the most vociferous terms any suggestion that he is a "naughty" boy. Even though he "knows better" he must defend his concept of himself to protect his organization.

#### ACCEPTANCE

The second major function involved in change of the phenomenal self we may call "acceptance." By acceptance we mean the inclusion of a new concept into the phenomenal self by means of a new differentiation of self. The child who possesses a concept of himself as "good" but is called "thief" by his parents or others surrounding him may eventually come to accept such an evaluation of himself as his phenomenal self. In time it may even happen that so far as he is concerned "bad" is a good way to be. Whether such acceptance occurs or not is of course dependent in the first place upon awareness of the discrepancy between the phenomenal self and the view held by others. Beyond this, acceptance appears to occur in one or more of the following ways:

*Gradual Change.* Changes in the phenomenal self may occur slowly and gradually. And such shifts may occur so gradually that the individual may never have been aware that a change has taken

place. It is rare, for example, that the adolescent is suddenly conscious of being grown up. In fact, it is more likely to be true that he still regards himself as a child far longer than is justified by his general development. This often results in behavior extremely annoying to adults who wonder why he doesn't grow up or "act his age." In time, with repeated evidence of his new status, however, most adolescents achieve a new differentiation of the phenomenal self more adequate to their new social status. It seems likely that gradual changes of this sort, as a result of repeated experiences, represent the most frequent type of change in the phenomenal self.

*Traumatic Change.* Changes also seem to occur, but more infrequently, with traumatic shocks of some sort where the entire organization of the individual is under threat. This is well illustrated in the case of a young woman with whom the writer once worked. As a child she had been happy and carefree. She felt quite secure in her position and conceived of herself as a "good girl." One evening her parents had a rather wild party and she was put to bed with instructions that she was not to get out of it under any circumstances. Curiosity, however, was too much for her and she got up, lay on the floor and watched the evenings proceedings in the room below through a grating in the floor. Here she fell asleep and in the night was overcome by coal gas fumes in the house. Later, she was discovered by her mother who was furious at her behavior. The child hung between life and death for several days during which time her mother did not let her forget that she would never have been in that condition had she been a "good girl" and done as she was told. This single incident was of such a traumatic nature that the child completely revised her self-concept and accepted her mother's definition of herself. Even by the time she came to college she was thoroughly convinced that she was indeed a very "bad" person. She had apparently developed a concept of herself as "guilty," and bowed to her mother's slightest whim because she felt she "owed" it to her. She gave up the career as a dancer she had wanted previous to her narrow escape to enter religious education in the hope of some day "saving" herself. Thus, under the traumatic shock of possible complete destruction a fairly violent change in the self-concept was brought about.

*Sheltered Group Changes.* Change in the phenomenal self may also occur more or less rapidly in the situation wherein the individual is more or less completely accepted by a portion of the society of which he is a member.

This is probably best illustrated as a pure case in non-directive therapy about which we shall have more to say in Chapter XIV. Other less completely accepting situations may be seen in psychotherapy in the use of sheltered groups and foster home placement. In such situations where the individual feels more or less accepted by a part of society, he is at least temporarily under no necessity for protecting his fundamental organization. Freed from the necessity for defense of his phenomenal self in a sheltered climate he is also free to examine his position more clearly and to accept a new definition of himself more in keeping with the external reality of the situation in which he moves.

## ⌘ CHAPTER VI ⌘

### *The Phenomenal Self in Action*

#### THE PHENOMENAL SELF AND ROLE PLAYING

WE have spoken of external reality and of the demands which it places upon the individual. We have pointed out, too, that it is not the externally observed demands which are important to him. These exist for others. They may or may not exist for him. The meanings which lie in his phenomenal field are the crucial factors in his behavior. It is not the externally observed demand which governs a person's behavior but the phenomenal demand; that is, the role which the individual himself perceives to be required of him in any situation. This may or may not be the same as the externally observed demand. For example, in the illustration we have used before, it is not when the temperature in my living room gets low that I do something about it, but when I am aware of the necessity for taking such action that my behavior changes. If I am deeply engrossed in some important point, I may not notice that the temperature has become uncomfortable until long after others in the same room have found it so.

The particular roles we feel called upon to play in any life situation are the goals and techniques we have differentiated as appropriate for us in those circumstances. Such roles will, of course, always be deeply affected by the phenomenal self which the individual holds. The professor and student act quite differently in the classroom. The behavior of each depends upon the concept he has of himself. The same person in the same situation at different times might feel called upon to make a speech, keep scrupulously clean, faint, tell a story, start a fight, or powder his nose. It is obvious that the very concept of self as a man or woman often grossly modifies the role one feels called upon to play in a social gathering.

## ROLES RESULT OF NEED SATISFACTION

Whatever roles we feel called upon to play, however, will always be a function of need satisfaction. So long as the role we perceive to be required leads to maintenance or enhancement of self it will be retained. Whenever, it becomes clear to us that our roles do not lead us to need satisfaction or are inconsistent with our way of regarding ourselves, we will change them to others more likely to produce results and more consistent with our phenomenal selves. Such changes occur in some such fashion as follows:

The culture in which one moves can tolerate some differences in behavior from the expected. When the individual's behavior passes this point of tolerance, it can no longer be accepted. At this point he may perceive that people do not act as he expects them to. His need satisfaction is frustrated. This results in feelings within him that "something is wrong." He feels unhappy and dissatisfied. In his subsequent search for need satisfaction he may differentiate new goals and techniques which bring him better results. This may or may not involve major changes in the phenomenal self. Let us take as an illustration the case of the man who considers himself to be a skillful driver. With such a concept of himself the situation demands that he have no accidents. However, our driver may have differentiated his role as one of demonstrating that he is a skillful driver by an air of nonchalance, by taking chances, by coming close but not too close, and the like. One day he has an accident. This is terrible. An accident is not at all consistent with his concept of himself, and he does everything he can to place the blame elsewhere. What is more, his role as a "chance taker" has let him down and no longer leads to need satisfaction. His perception of this situation will lead him to the role consistent with his new phenomenal field. He may develop a "drive with care" technique in place of the former "come close but not too close." This illustration assumes that only the required role is brought under doubt by our driver's accident. Of course, it will be recognized that if his concept of himself as a skillful driver is too greatly threatened, he may not become a safer driver, but a more dangerous one to satisfy his need to defend his phenomenal self.



## THE PHENOMENAL SELF AND BODILY CONDITION

## EFFECT OF BODY CONDITION ON THE PHENOMENAL SELF

We have previously pointed out that the phenomenal self is more or less roughly defined by the body surfaces of the individual. It would appear, then, that the body and its condition as a part of the field of the organism must have some effect upon behavior. And this is certainly true. Prenatally, since the external environment of the foetus consists almost entirely of liquid at a fairly constant temperature, the body and its condition probably constitutes almost the entire field of the organism. It is probable that for most of us every field state includes more or less of this body condition as an integral part of the total field.<sup>1</sup> In the course of development furthermore, each of us comes to differentiate more or less strongly particular aspects of body condition in the definition of the phenomenal field. Which aspect we differentiate most strongly is likely to represent a function of the phenomenal self. Thus, men are more likely to be concerned with physical vigor, while for women in our culture the particular figure in vogue or facial beauty is likely to be most strongly differentiated. Frequently children are far more concerned with physical size and strength than with other aspects of the body while adolescents are mainly interested in those aspects which make for successful competition, for the attention of the opposite sex.

For most people the smooth-running body in good condition is likely to give a feeling of enhancement of the self as being adequate, competent and in control of situations. A poor physical condition on the other hand may result in the definition of the phenomenal self as in some fashion humiliated. This is often seen, for example, in persons who possess some form of handicap. It is interesting that the possession of such a handicap may strongly affect the phenomenal self. The present writer recalls a young girl with whom he once worked who was frightfully conscious of her nose. To my observation, it was not in the least unusual but for her it was a constant badge of shame and

<sup>1</sup>One exception to this condition would seem to be that situation described by Bettelheim (22), wherein, under extreme stress the phenomenal self may be defined outside the limits of the body entirely. It is probable that this condition exists only very rarely if ever in the lives of most individuals.

humiliation. Eventually, she patronized a plastic surgeon who, so she said, helped a great deal by reducing her nose although no change was apparent to me. It is clear that she was attending to an aspect of her body dictated by her concept of herself. Furthermore, a slight change in this bodily characteristic apparently resulted in considerable changes in her phenomenal self.

#### EFFECT OF THE PHENOMENAL SELF ON BODY CONDITION

It seems evident that the effect of the body on the phenomenal self is not the only direction in which this body-self relationship can operate. The reverse situation seems also to be very frequent with the phenomenal self profoundly effecting the bodily condition of the individual. This is particularly evident in the new field of psychosomatics where bodily disturbances appear as the result of psychological problems. Almost any psychotherapist has had cases of this sort. One of the most interesting in our experience was the case of a young woman who had been extremely overprotected all her life by a very domineering mother. At college she had stuck closely to another girl very much like herself. Immediately after graduation her friend left to be married but this young woman remained at home. Within a few days of graduation she developed eczema on one hand which rapidly spread to cover her entire body and particularly her face. Obviously, in such a condition it was impossible for her to seek a position. She traveled about from doctor to doctor and clinic to clinic without success. Away at camp her complaint completely disappeared but the moment she returned to the city it returned in full force. While talking with the writer this skin condition could be observed to become less and less pronounced as the hour proceeded. The slightest reference to her condition or attack upon her organization of any sort however would bring it rushing back. Eventually this client came to achieve some insight into her condition but found difficulty in admitting the nature of it even to herself. This was necessarily true, since to admit any such shenanigans would be a threat to her concept of herself as a brilliant student of psychology. The fact, that others in whom she had faith thought her condition to be psychological however, was disturbing. It became necessary to rid herself of the condition without accepting the

complaint as psychological. This she did by adopting a diet she heard of from someone she met on the street. Within a week her skin had cleared up. Since then she has obtained a job and moved on to a better adjustment in other ways as well. It is also significant that in spite of discontinuing her absurd diet her condition has not returned. From many examples of this type it would seem possible that in certain types of physical disturbances, real changes in the bodily condition of an individual may be brought about by changes in the phenomenal self.

#### THE PHENOMENAL SELF AND LEVEL OF ASPIRATION

We have seen in Chapter IV how the individual's goals become differentiated in the course of his development depending upon the experiences to which he has been subjected. We have seen too how these goals are affected by the phenomenal self. Depending upon the concept of self possessed by the individual, he will choose this goal or that as appropriate for such a person as he regards himself to be. The man who regards himself as a pretty good bookkeeper probably does not set a goal for himself to be President of the United States, nor does the successful physician adopt as a goal for himself retirement to a comfortable job as garbage collector. Whatever goals are considered worthy of the individual's consideration are dependent upon the ways in which he regards himself.

The strength of the goal or the values which the individual attaches to them, moreover, will be a function of the degree to which the goals selected satisfy his fundamental need in maintaining and enhancing the phenomenal self. For example, the authors of this book have for some weeks been working hard at this manuscript and resenting almost every other intrusion upon this goal even to the extent, on occasion, of resenting the very work which brings them a livelihood. Other goals have arisen at times but almost all of these have had to give way before the impelling force of finishing this work. And this would be expected. The authors are aware that one's prestige in psychological work is very largely dependent upon one's publication. Since both of us are interested in our *fields* what else would one expect? To suggest to us the possibility of spending the afternoon at an exhibition of Ming china vases would be unlikely of any response,

because it would not be consistent with the way in which we regard ourselves at this time.

The individual's level of aspiration represents his characteristic goals and the values he attaches to them. These things toward which he aspires will, in the final analysis, be dependent upon his phenomenal self, and the degree to which he perceives the goal as contributing to the maintenance and the enhancement of that self. We have previously discussed the relationship existing between the phenomenal self and the demands of others. This relationship has some very interesting bearings on the individual's level of aspiration.

We might consider three possible variations of this relationship of self-concept to external reality. Generally speaking they would be: (1) Where the phenomenal self is roughly equivalent to the evaluation of society. (2) Where the phenomenal self is defined in terms of less value than the society places upon the individual and his behavior. (3) Where the phenomenal self is operating on a more or less higher level of value than the culture places on the individual.

In the first instance where the phenomenal self is roughly comparable to the reactions of the culture to the individual, behavior will be consistent with the culture. Furthermore, having a realistic appraisal of himself, his goals and the values he places upon them will be consistent with the culture and with his own possibilities. Thus, the individual's level of aspiration will be set at a plane which is possible to one with his abilities and characteristics. The goals he deems appropriate for him, and the values he sets upon them will be within his limitations, or achievable by his efforts.

#### LEVEL OF ASPIRATION AND INTERESTS

The second possibility, where the individual holds a concept of himself at considerably less than the evaluation placed upon him by his culture, is probably characteristic of people with very strong interests. In this case, others are constantly acting toward him in terms of what they expect, while he conceives himself as of less value than their reactions indicate. He is likely to be deeply gratified with the results of his behavior and because of society's reactions to him is encouraged to continue his efforts. He is likely to appear modest

and unassuming in his goals so long as his phenomenal self remains at a level below the evaluation of others. Unfortunately this situation does not last very long.<sup>2</sup> It will be recalled from our previous discussion, that the phenomenal self changes with repeated evidences of a difference between the phenomenal self and what other people think of him, provided such evaluations do not represent a threat to his organization. If perceptions do not represent a threat to it upon repeated evidences of accomplishment, he is likely to adjust his self-concept until it approximates the cultural evaluation. When this has occurred, the person has reached a situation such as we have described, in our first instance, above. As a result the intense interest he once showed is likely to exist no longer, for the satisfactions derived from the reactions of these surrounding him will no longer be greatly different from his expectation. A good example of this may be seen in the child who is learning to roller skate. In the beginning he conceives of himself as being unable to skate. But other children like him are skating and to maintain and enhance his phenomenal self, he, too, wishes to roller skate. When he puts on his new skates, however, he finds it much harder than he had expected and probably finds that Mother Earth is less comforting than he had been led to believe. But the reactions of those about him are encouraging. They tell him "That's fine." Obviously, this is an evaluation at considerable variance from what he probably feels himself. It results in further efforts and more commendation while he is developing his skill. Eventually the time arrives when he has developed some degree of skill in this sport and comes to regard himself as "able to skate" or even as "a good skater." Now, however, the commendation and plaudits of others are likely to be far less strong or frequent and his ability to skate may even be taken for granted among his peers. Much of the satisfactions involved are lost. Unless others have taken their place it is likely that his interest and desire to skate will disappear.

It is observations of this sort of behavior that have led some people to feel that we are interested in those things that are problems to us. When they are no longer problems we are likely to lose interest.

<sup>2</sup>This separation of the phenomenal self and external reality is in fact what society describes as maladjustment. Under certain circumstances this condition may last a very long time.

To say that we are interested in those things that are problems to us is another way of saying that we perceive that we do not measure up to some aspect of our culture. The adolescent who can't dance when this is expected in his group feels learning to dance is a problem; the adult who desires to keep up with his neighbors finds "how to get a new car" presents an interesting problem.

#### LEVEL OF ASPIRATION BEYOND LEVEL OF ABILITY

The third possibility we have suggested in which the individual's phenomenal self appears on a plane considerably higher than the evaluation of the culture in which he moves results in extreme efforts and may result in a level of aspiration far out of touch with his real abilities or achievements. This is what would normally be expected in such instances. With a phenomenal self at odds with a cultural evaluation, the behavior of others represents a direct threat to the organization of his phenomenal self. Under threat the person is forced to its defense and is likely to raise his sights higher to prove, not only to others but to himself as well, that his evaluation of himself is justified. This is often very characteristic of many college students. College students for the most part have always been more or less successful in school—otherwise they would not be in college. Having been successful and having formed a concept of self in these terms by comparison with less brilliant contemporaries in the grade- and high-school years, many come to college expecting to operate in the same terms. Unfortunately, college students are highly selected, and the competition for grades is much keener than the student has probably ever before experienced. With a concept of self higher than justified by the facts in the new environment he sets his goals in terms of what was previously normal for him. This may bring him lower grades than he is accustomed to receiving. Not to reach his goals is a threat to his organization, and he insists on them all the more strongly because they are under attack. He may even raise them higher. It is no wonder that experiments with college students show an unrealistic level of aspiration in terms of grades. The level of aspiration we hold is the direct outgrowth of the concepts we have of ourselves.

## THE PHENOMENAL SELF, FEELING, AND EMOTION

## NATURE OF FEELING

A very large part of what a person is describing when he speaks of his "feelings" is made up of his awareness of the bodily conditions he differentiates at that moment out of his field. These "feelings" are his description of his field at any given moment and usually contain some reference to body states. For example, when I say that "I feel fine," what I am describing is the nature of my field at the moment including the state of my body. This is my way of expressing to others the vague organization of physiologic conditions existing within me at the moment as well as, perhaps, my knowledge of having achieved something noteworthy. If I am pressed for further description I might say "I feel vigorous," "my body tone is up" or "I feel like I could lick my weight in wildcats." On the other hand, when I feel "blue," if pressed I would probably tell you that I feel "funny in the stomach," "feel tired," "heavy in the chest," etc.

Often feelings, which are really descriptions of phenomenal field states, have been confused with causes of behavior. Actually they represent no more than the individual's differentiation of a part of his field in symbolic and often highly stereotyped terms. As descriptions it is clear they cannot be causes of behavior. When a person says "I did it because I felt like it" what he is describing in a vague way is his phenomenal field at the moment of his act. When he says he "felt" "angry" and struck his assailant or felt "afraid" and fled from the scene, his behavior was not motivated by the feeling but was a result of the perceptions existing in the phenomenal field at the moment. In either case, his bodily state was probably identical in either situation, for we know that the physiologic aspects of any "emotion" are always the same in kind though they may differ in degree. As a matter of fact, if the threat to his organization was very great he probably was not even aware of his "feelings." It is a common experience that in moments of great stress we may act with extreme vigor and are often surprised to find we did not feel afraid till the moment of crisis had passed. This is probably due to the fact that we were not aware of our body state during the moment of crisis and only became so when

sufficient leisure was reached for attention to be directed to body conditions. Being "afraid" is thus the individual's description of his state—his personal reference and has nothing to do with cause or effect of the behavior of the moment of action. The behavior is the result of the phenomenal field not the feeling which describes the field.

#### THE PHENOMENAL SELF AND EMOTION

Experimental studies of the causes of emotional behavior have been made only in fairly recent times. For a long time fear and anger as well as other emotions, were assumed to be innate responses to fairly definite situations. This assumption, which tended to discourage any efforts to modify emotional behavior by training, was first questioned by Watson.

From that point on the psychologist's concept of emotion has undergone a rapid evolution until today. Most non-personal psychologists have adopted a description of emotion as being non-specific—a "disorganized response" on the part of the organism irrespective of the nature of the stimulus which sets it off. They point out that any person will become excited, afraid, or angry when he is in a situation which he is unable to control.

Most recently, a number of psychologists, perhaps best represented by Prescott, have expressed disagreement with this view and have seen emotion, not as disorganized response alone, but, as having an organizing and facilitating effect as well. These writers see all behavior as possessing more or less of the physiologic accompaniments of what is usually called emotion. They point out, for example, that "in slight emergencies such as threat of a prick, erotic reading, breaking glass, the showing of cooked beefsteak, threat of pinching, joking, and unexpected touching of the skin of the back" (151) there is a slight increase in all our bodily activities.

It is probably the increased consciousness of personal power and effectiveness that results from this heightened bodily activity that causes people to like excitement, adventure and change, to ride on roller coasters, to travel for pleasure, and to go on blind dates. By placing ourselves in situations that automatically demand a moderate



rise in body tonus, we secure a sense of well-being and physical power that is very satisfying to our fundamental need for enhancement of the phenomenal self.

In the presence of a problem of modest difficulty we raise our fuel consumption and output of energy above the "idling" rate which is sufficient for the maintenance of bodily temperature and increase the activity of practically all parts of the body. With increasing demand for action on the part of the organism, the physiologic changes accompanying an emotional state are increased. This mobilization of the resources of the organism was described by Cannon (30) as placing the organism "on a war footing." It results in making available the necessary energy resources required either for meeting or fleeing the threat confronting the individual. When the threat to the organization of his phenomenal self is minor, the emotional concomitants of behavior result in facilitating his activities; with increasing threat to the phenomenal self, the emotional response of the body becomes more and more intense. Eventually, if the threat is sufficiently great, this increased stimulation may pass the threshold of the individual's tolerance and result in truly disorganized behavior. In this way, an observer might watch an approaching tornado with mild excitement. As the tornado came closer, and it became clear that he was in its path this interest might be heightened to even greater attention and activity as he sought shelter and, finally with the tornado upon him might even result in so great an emotion as to "paralyze him with fright."

#### EMOTION AND TENSION

In the past there has been a tendency to regard emotions as a cause of behavior. This appears to be a confusion of the symptom for the cause. Even psychologists have been known thus to confuse symptom for cause. Some writers have spoken of a child's aggressive behavior as being a result of its anger, or a mother's overprotection as a result of her love for her child, and it is extremely frequent to find references to behavior occurring "because the individual is afraid."

It is probably more accurate, to say that emotion is a state of tension or readiness to act. This tension represents the reaction of the organism to the perception of the possibility of need satisfaction

(self-enhancement) or the perception of threat (maintenance of self). Thus emotion or tension is a behavioral manifestation of the organism's attempt to satisfy need. As is true of any other behavior we may regard tension as a symptom of the activity of the organism in maintaining and enhancing the phenomenal self. Thus, when we say an individual "wants" to go downtown, the "wanting" is not an emotion but his vague description of his phenomenal field. How much he "wants" or the degree of disturbance he shows when prevented from achieving his goal is roughly equivalent to the degree to which he perceives such blocking as a threat to his phenomenal self.<sup>3</sup>

What the individual describes as his emotion is actually his account of his personal relation to the situation. The greater the personal reference in any situation, the greater is the degree of emotional experience for him. It is well known, for example, that stage fright is a function of this personal reference. The greater the attention to self, the greater is the likelihood of crippling emotional reactions. If the speaker can use a common technique and "get his mind off himself" such emotional responses quickly disappear. Almost any school child is familiar with the stunt of getting another to blush by focusing the latter's attention on himself. The blusher may also be aware that he can quickly reduce his tension if he can turn his attention and that of others away from himself.

#### THE DEGREE OF TENSION EXPERIENCED

The person under tension is seeking satisfaction of need. The feeling of tension in him is the result of his awareness either of menace to his organization or to the possibility of self-enhancement. The degree of tension experienced will vary widely dependent upon two factors: (1) The immediacy of need satisfaction perceived and (2) the clarity of differentiation.

In the first instance, the degree of tension will be a function of the nearness in time and space of the threatening or enhancing object. Threats occurring right now are perceived as much more menacing

<sup>3</sup> Thus James' (1905) description of the emotion as following the event is only partially in error in this frame of reference. The error lies in that the emotion comes not after the objective event, but after the perception of threat to the self.

than those which are some time off. Atomic bombing ten years from now does not seem nearly as threatening as planes overhead today. The grade which comes at the end of the semester is not nearly so threatening in the first few weeks as it becomes during final exam week. In the same way, the tiger which I see through my binoculars a mile off will cause me much less concern than the one on the other side of that bush. In speaking of proximity in space it is necessary to think, not in terms of physical space, but psychological space. The tiger behind the bars at the zoo may be no further away than the one behind the bush, but in terms of my own perceptions he is, even so, at a very safe distance. This principle of the immediacy of threat is nicely illustrated in the neurotic whose anxiety increases markedly and whose attempts to escape become more frantic as he approaches in time and space the threat he perceives to himself. There are always more "nervous breakdowns" just before final exams than at any other time.

All of the illustrations we have used here have been with respect to threat. The principle is just as true in terms of enhancement. When Christmas is six months away, the prospect of a picnic today is much more exciting to the child than the bicycle Santa Claus promises to bring.

The second factor affecting tension is the degree to which the situation is differentiated by the individual as dangerous or enhancing to the phenomenal self. In newborn babes, for example, the awareness of their environment is so vague that only extreme and sudden changes in it will arouse responses violent enough to seem emotional to others. As the child develops, differentiations become greater, and some time after he is six months old he may burst into tears at the approach of an aggressive stranger or when placed on the floor in a strange house. His parents may be quite at a loss to explain his behavior because he has never shown such reactions in similar situations before. The real reason for his behavior, however, is probably this: that he had not previously differentiated his environment with sufficient detail to know that those situations were strange.

The very degree of tension appears to depend upon the individual's evaluation of the amount of enhancement or threat to himself he

perceives. This is well illustrated in the old saying that "familiarity breeds contempt." The novice at flying may be quite upset by the very thought of leaving the ground, while after such an experience, he may even seek further opportunities to fly because he so enjoys the excitement. The pilot of his plane, on the other hand, may be quite bored with it all and find his job monotonous and dull. Since the threat or enhancement involved in any situation is to the phenomenal self, and since the phenomenal self of each of us is a completely unique function, it is clear that the tension we experience must also be different for each of us. The amount of need satisfaction inherent in any situation will be dependent upon the relationship which the situation bears to the phenomenal self as observed by the individual. Obviously, the person who conceives of himself as a very effective and popular public speaker will have a very different approach to an invitation to speak before an audience from one who conceives of himself as inadequate or of queer appearance. For the accomplished speaker it can be truly said that the idea of anyone laughing at him on the platform "never entered his head," while for the novice this thought may be very nearly paralyzing in the emotional response it calls forth.

#### NARROWING OF THE FIELD UNDER TENSION

It has often been observed that in emotional experiences there exists a very high degree of attention sometimes referred to as "tunnel vision." In a threatening situation the individual may concentrate so completely upon one aspect of a situation as to be entirely unaware of other objects or events within range. This "narrowing of the field" appears to exist roughly in proportion to the degree of threat to the organization or the degree of enhancement of the phenomenal self perceived. The greater the personal reference, the greater the narrowing of the field. The girl too concerned over her appearance entering a room is only too likely to be unaware of the disastrous carpet edge in her path. The dancing pupil too concerned about placement of his feet misses the cues from his partner and the music and succeeds only in mashing his partner's toes. The inexperienced driver so intent

on his personal reactions in shifting gears may run over his neighbor's fence or not even see the stoplight.

This "narrowing of the field" is often observed in anticipation as well. In anticipation, however, it is the degree of self-enhancement to be gained that governs the degree of emotion although elements of threat may also be present. The closer the organism approaches the goal the greater is the expected enhancement, and the more narrowly the field is delimited. The closer to Christmas it gets the more excited the child may become; and Christmas morning, while he waits for slow-moving parents to arise and go downstairs, is almost more than a child can bear. Perhaps the best example of this narrowing of the field in anticipation is to be observed in sexual intercourse.

In summary, we might state the basic principle of tension as follows: The more immediate and the clearer the perception of either (1) the need to defend the phenomenal self or (2) the perception of the enhancement of the phenomenal self the greater will be the narrowing of the field to the threatening or enhancing goal, and the greater the expenditure of energy.

#### THE PHENOMENAL SELF AND THE SELF-CONCEPT

In our discussion to this point we have frequently used the terms, phenomenal self and self-concept. At first glance, these appear to have been used indiscriminately. As a matter of fact, there has been a fine distinction in these terms as we have used them. The discerning reader may already have discovered the basis of distinction. Let us pause, here, for a moment to review briefly the relationship of the phenomenal field, phenomenal self, and self-concept. We have stated that all behavior is a function of the phenomenal field. This phenomenal field we have described as the universe as it appears to the individual at any moment. Not all parts of the field, however, will be equally important in determining his behavior at any instant. Of particular importance in the motivation of behavior will be those parts of the phenomenal field perceived by him to be part or characteristic of himself. To refer to this important aspect of the total field we have used the term *phenomenal self*.

This term, however, includes many aspects of the phenomenal field, such as the individual's physical self and many relationships of self to physical objects and to the culture, which are only infrequently or weakly in figure at any moment. To delimit the portion of the phenomenal field with which we are dealing more specifically, to those elements most potently and frequently effecting behavior, we have used the more precise term, self-concept.

#### THE SELF-CONCEPT

There will often be times in phenomenological psychology when even such a delimited concept as the phenomenal self includes many extraneous factors not essential to the prediction of behavior. Although the tip of my little finger is certainly part of my phenomenal self, it is seldom differentiated into figure in the course of my daily life. The same is true with respect to many other ideas and concepts which are part of my phenomenal self. It is only rarely, for instance, that I have to fix a leaky faucet and conceive of myself as an amateur plumber. Nor is my occasional concept of myself as one likely to be of major importance in understanding my behavior. On the other hand, I conceive of myself as a professor six days a week and sometimes on Sunday and holidays. This description of myself is very frequently in figure in my phenomenal field and exerts a very considerable influence on my behavior a good deal of the time. A number of other ways in which I have come to regard myself are similarly frequently in figure and affect my behavior on many occasions. These descriptions of self are the most clearly differentiated aspects of my phenomenal field in terms of which I behave more or less constantly. These highly differentiated, more or less permanent aspects of the phenomenal self make up my concept of myself. We may define this self-concept as follows: *The self-concept includes those parts of the phenomenal field which the individual has differentiated as definite and fairly stable characteristics of himself.*

It will be recognized that the phenomenal self is part of the phenomenal field and the self-concept is an abstraction from the phenomenal self. Both the latter terms are used only for convenience to describe more specific aspects of the total phenomenal field. They

are by no means static or precise, furthermore but shade indistinguishably into each other. Although both of these terms are frequently used in the remainder of this volume it should be understood that they are but descriptive terms of convenience to describe parts of the total field. Behavior is never a function of a part of the field alone. It is always a function of the total phenomenal field at any instant.

## Σ CHAPTER VII Σ

### *People Under Threat: The Anatomy of Maladjustment*

#### ADJUSTMENT AND MALADJUSTMENT

The unceasing striving of human beings for need satisfaction places all of us under some degree of tension at every moment of our lives. Some of us are more successful in achieving need satisfaction than others, but none of us is ever granted leave from the struggle for any length of time. In the course of this never-ending search we may behave in countless varieties of ways. Other people looking at our behavior may describe us as adjusted or maladjusted, depending upon the degree to which our behavior conforms to their own expectancies. From our own points of view however, we do not describe ourselves as adjusted or maladjusted unless we are students of psychology or persons who are accustomed to trying to see themselves "objectively." Most of us describe ourselves in terms of our "feelings." We say we are happy or unhappy, satisfied or dissatisfied, angry or in love, depending upon the degree of tension we feel, the extent to which our need is being satisfied, and the goals through which we are seeking to satisfy our need.

The terms "adjustment" and "maladjustment" are terms from an external frame of reference. They are used to describe behavior as it appears to an outside observer. More often than not they are applied to evaluations of the extent to which an individual's behavior conforms to social expectancy. While they have a real usefulness in an external setting, they are likely to prove extremely inadequate in helping us to understand the behavior of a unique human being. Many a maladjusted individual appears to be quite well satisfied with himself and many a "well-adjusted" person may actually be desperately unhappy. What brings the person to the clinic is not the situation



as it is seen by others, but the situation as he sees it himself. The case histories of any clinic reveal dozens of persons whom others would judge to be quite well adjusted, but who still feel so ineffective or unhappy as to seek the assistance of the clinical psychologist. Persons tortured and driven by feelings of inadequacy have even been pointed out with pride as examples of industry and perseverance for our children. On college campuses, homosexuals have been voted "best adjusted girl in our sorority." External observations are by no means adequate in understanding the particular human being.

In this chapter we shall be talking about some kinds of behaviors ordinarily described as "maladjustment." But since these terms do not adequately describe situations as the individual himself sees them, we shall broaden our perspective and seek to discover the dynamics by which individuals come under tension and attempt to resolve tensions once they exist. We will be particularly concerned with attempting to understand persons under threat; those people who cannot seem to resolve their tensions effectively and who become unhappy, ineffective personalities.

## DIFFERENTIATION AND THREAT

### DIFFERENTIATION AND NEED SATISFACTION

We have described the basic need of the individual as the maintenance or enhancement of his phenomenal self. Whether or not satisfaction of this need is possible for the individual will depend upon the differentiations he is able to make in his phenomenal field. If, to satisfy my need, it is necessary for me to be twenty miles from this spot in two hours, I shall certainly not be able to satisfy my need if the only means of travel I have differentiated in my field is walking. Recently a new drinking fountain was installed in one of our college buildings. The need of the present writer was momentarily frustrated until he had differentiated that *this* fountain worked by a foot pedal instead of the usual handle.

Those individuals whose perceptions make possible the satisfaction of need are happy, effective, and efficient people. On the other hand, those whose differentiations do not permit of adequate need satisfac-

tion are likely to be ineffective, unhappy, and generally thwarted personalities. These latter constitute the group of persons we describe as twisted personalities, as maladjusted people and who, themselves, feel inadequate and threatened in their dealings with life. Since all of us are concerned continuously with the satisfaction of need, there is probably no field of investigation more important for the psychologist than the development of an understanding of the dynamics by which need frustration occurs. This is particularly true for the clinical psychologist but is equally so for the social worker, the teacher, the psychiatrist, and any others who deal with human beings under threat. To understand the dynamics of need satisfaction, however, demands an understanding of the factors affecting differentiation in the phenomenal field upon which need satisfaction depends.

#### LEVELS OF DIFFERENTIATION

The individual is always aware of what exists in his phenomenal field. In fact, the field might even be described as one's personal field of awareness. Not all aspects of the phenomenal field, however, will be equally differentiated. Far from it. Differentiation is not an all or none process. There may be all levels of awareness at any moment depending upon the degree to which aspects of the field are differentiated. Differentiations may exist from extreme vagueness to very clear-cut, well-defined perceptions. Perhaps these levels are best illustrated in awakening from sleep. In sleep the individual is still aware but probably quite vaguely. As his alarm clock rings, the sleeper seems first to perceive the ringing as "some disturbance." His behavior, too, at this stage is likely to be vague and unprecise. When the disturbance is further differentiated as the clock ringing his behavior becomes more precisely oriented toward it to turn off the alarm. Finally, he may perceive that this is not just a located disturbance, but a sound symbol which has a whole complex of meanings associated with getting up, starting a new day, getting to work on time, and the like. Differentiations may thus occur at any level of awareness from extreme vagueness to a very high degree of clarity.

Probably the highest level of differentiation we achieve is symbolization. A symbol is a device by which it is possible to differentiate

quite clearly a whole complex of meanings. Take the word "justice," for example, which is a very highly differentiated symbol, having a large number of implications handily packaged in a single word. Such symbols are likely to become very highly stabilized perceptions and often appear to become frozen in position. Various aspects of the self-concept often seem to be symbolized in this way and have a very large bearing upon behavior. It is extremely difficult to change the voting habits of a person who has come to symbolize himself as a "rock-ribbed Republican," or "Jacksonian Democrat," or as an important "Party man," for example. To a very large degree the phenomenal field will be composed of such symbols.

#### INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER OF DIFFERENTIATIONS

Not all differentiations in the phenomenal field of a particular individual will be of equal importance in need satisfaction. Many, indeed, will have but a remote relationship or play but minor parts in the person's total economy. The casual smoker who perceives smoking a cigarette as a goal, perhaps to help himself feel more comfortable after dinner, may not be greatly disturbed when he is dining in a place where such behavior is not permitted.

On the other hand, some differentiations made in the phenomenal field may very vitally effect need satisfaction. For example, the child who differentiates "asking questions" as a goal through which he can feel important and wanted may be deeply disturbed by the busy adult who ridicules his questioning. Whether an individual feels his need is frustrated will depend in large measure upon how he perceives a particular event in his phenomenal field. To put this another way, the degree of frustration felt by the individual will be a function of the meaning of the frustrating event in his field and, in particular, how he perceives that event as affecting the satisfaction of need.

Whether or not it is possible for the individual to achieve need satisfaction will depend upon the level and unique character of the differentiations he is able to make in his phenomenal field. If these perceptions result in behavior adequate to meet life situations, need satisfaction is achieved and the individual feels happy, effective, and operates with a minimum of disturbance. If they are not adequate, he

is likely to feel unhappy, frustrated and ineffective and may even make his situation worse by the behavior to which it leads him. A great deal of clinical work seems to be directed at assisting clients to make more adequate differentiations than have previously been possible for them. The handling of parents who bring a bed-wetting child to the clinic is a case in point. If they have perceived his bed wetting as "Jimmy is just being nasty," their behavior toward him is bound to be a function of that differentiation. Seeing his behavior as "being nasty," differentiations involving punishment, restraint, shaming, or "teaching Jimmy to behave" are likely to follow. On the other hand, if these parents can be assisted to perceive Jimmy's behavior in other and more adequate terms, their behavior will be different, and even their future perceptions may be vitally affected. This is exactly what the clinician attempts to do. If the parents can be helped to regard Jimmy's behavior as that of a child who is "upset," a whole new series of differentiations, and so on of behaviors becomes possible. Viewing his trouble as a result of being upset is likely to lead, for instance, to differentiations as to the nature of what is upsetting the child and may even lead to perceptions on the part of the parents as to their own behavior toward Jimmy. Such changed perceptions may make more adequate behavior possible.

#### THE LIMITING FACTORS IN DIFFERENTIATION

In the previous chapter we have defined threat as the individual's awareness of menace to his phenomenal self. Since his need is to maintain and enhance it, the only thing he can do under threat is to defend the organization which exists. This may or may not result in a removal of the threat he feels. If it does, the crisis has been met and the organism's need is satisfied. On the other hand, if the individual cannot solve the threatening situation the threat may persist and continue to frustrate need for long periods of time. Such threats to the phenomenal self are the most characteristic aspect of persistent tension states.

Fortunately, most of the threats we meet in the course of our daily lives can be quickly and easily differentiated and met in one fashion or another. We may shift our goals and techniques, for instance, and

so be able to meet the emergency with which we are faced. When the teacher has blocked the child's need by making him feel less adequate or important than he feels is his due, he may regain his feeling of importance by coming home to beat up his brother or annoy his parents. Many threats to the phenomenal self may be met in similar ways. The situation becomes more complicated, however, when threats to the phenomenal self are persistent and extreme or result from inadequate perceptions. Threats felt by the individual arising from inadequate perceptions result in inadequate behavior. Inadequate behavior, in turn, will not resolve threats but may even increase their potency. It is certain that if a person cannot perceive what threatens him he will be unable to deal with it effectively. Being unable to perceive what is threatening, the individual feels menaced, and acts accordingly, but he is likely only to thrash around wildly and get nowhere. It is this failure of perception to guide his behavior toward the resolution of threat which in large part keeps him in a state of tension. What, then, are the factors which may produce these inadequate differentiations?

#### THE PHYSICAL ORGANISM

If need satisfaction is dependent upon adequate perception, it will be necessary for us to understand the nature of the limitations upon differentiation which produce inadequate perceptions. Perhaps the most obvious of these is the limitation imposed by the physical organism itself. Since perception occurs in a physical organism, it must, of course, be dependent on the organism's ability to make perceptions. Thus, limitations upon sensory receptors will unavoidably limit in considerable measure the differentiations possible to the individual. Differentiations of sound can be only incomplete in the deaf and visual perceptions will not be possible for the blind. The limits which physical defects sometimes impose upon perception are dramatically illustrated by Mongolian idiocy, cretinism and other specific defeats, and syndromes. There is good reason to believe that the scope and clarity of any individual's behavior is also generally limited by his efficiency as a physical organism, by the general fund of energy which he has available.

## DIFFERENTIATION REQUIRES TIME

A second factor limiting differentiation is time. Obviously, adequate perceptions to meet life situations will not be possible if there is not sufficient time to make them. Almost everyone is familiar with this fact from his own experience. Every now and then, after we have been in a situation and feel we have behaved inadequately, we tell ourselves "If I hadn't been so rushed," "If only I had had time." What we are expressing is our own feeling of the need for time to make adequate differentiations.

How much time will be required to make adequate perceptions will depend in part upon the remainder of the limitations we are discussing. One other important factor however, needs to be discussed at this point. That is, the relationship of new differentiations to old. At any moment, the phenomenal field is structured by the totality of the individual's previous experience. What new perceptions he can make, will thus depend, in part, upon those he has previously made. Many perceptions he must make in life depend upon a whole series of previous differentiations. We do not expect a child to make the same differentiations made by an adult because he has not lived long enough to have the experience required to make some highly refined perceptions. The amount of time required in making a new differentiation, therefore, will depend in part upon the individual's previous experience and the degree to which new differentiations differ from the old.

## ENVIRONMENTAL LIMITS UPON DIFFERENTIATION

A third factor affecting the perceptions possible to the individual will be the potentialities afforded by the environment to which he has been and is exposed. This is simply to say that before differentiations can be made, the opportunity for differentiation must be present. In the illustration we have used above, if the parents have never been exposed to the idea that bed wetting might be due to a child's being upset, and if all their experience with this sort of thing has always meant for them that children wet their beds willfully, they can hardly be expected to arrive at any other conclusion. In the same way, a child brought up in an environment which continually treats him as inade-

quate is not likely to grow up with great feelings of confidence about himself.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS LIMITING DIFFERENTIATION

A number of psychological factors limit the perceptions an individual is able to make. Three, in particular, have very important bearings upon the adequacy of differentiation and hence of need satisfaction. The first of these is the inaccessability of some differentiations in the field due to their appearance only at very low levels of differentiation. Appearing at very low levels of differentiation, they effect later differentiations while never appearing in figure with sufficient clarity to be effectively dealt with. It is probable that most of us have a very large number of such low-level differentiations which affect our current perceptions and may, on occasion, lead us into inadequate behavior. Many of our likes, dislikes, hunches, and attitudes are probably affected by low-order differentiations. First impressions about other people seem frequently to be so modified. We may react to meeting a new person, for instance, by liking or disliking them and may find ourselves quite at a loss to be able to tell why we have reacted so. When we have had time and opportunity for further differentiation, we may, on later occasions, be able to describe our feelings more specifically.

It is probable that all adults have a considerable number of such low-order differentiations which appear to be holdovers from childhood experiences. Often these seem to exist because, when the original experience occurred, there were not sufficient previous differentiations to allow the new experience clear figure. Sometimes this seems to be due to a sheer lack of the necessary symbols in terms of which the perception could be made at the time of the original experience. The child's failure to clearly differentiate his dislike for his schoolteacher as a dislike for "Miss Warren," specifically, may result in a low-order differentiation never brought into clear figure. On later occasions he may find himself strangely disliking people who wear glasses, have red hair, or who have any of a thousand other characteristics of Miss Warren.

These low-order differentiations are extremely common in the phenomenon of paramnesia in which we get the feeling of complete fa-

miliarity with a new place although we have never been there before. In such cases we are responding in terms of perceptions about previous places we have been and which we have never clearly brought into figure. Hence, we get a feeling of familiarity because the new situation is vaguely like the previous one. It seems likely that the real explanation for extrasensory perception may be found in such differentiations.

Such low-order differentiations often appear to be responsible for the unhappiness and ineffectiveness of persons who seek psychological assistance. Frequently the clear perception or symbolization of some childhood event is sufficient to assist the individual to new and more adequate differentiations in his present life situations. This is, in part, what psychoanalysis attempts to bring about.

#### SUPPRESSION

A similar effect to that we have just been describing in the production of inadequate perceptions is brought about by the suppression of differentiations to a lower order. In this case inadequate perception is due to the refusal of the individual to accept a differentiation in clear figure. Suppression is the sort of thing we attempt to do when we try to "forget it." Unfortunately, a suppressed differentiation is still in the phenomenal field and still threatening. The need of the organism, furthermore, will not permit a threat to exist without action on the part of the individual. As a result, the threat, although not clearly differentiated, keeps the organism continuously in a state of tension. This is the type of situation frequently observed in the neurotic. Differentiations threatening to the phenomenal self may be kept at a low level of differentiation, but they still threaten. As a result the neurotic complains of being afraid, anxious, uneasy but is unable to tell us of what he is afraid. Or, he may differentiate his fear in some fashion not very plausible even to himself. The suppression of threatening perceptions is not surprising since, if the threat is very great, clear perceptions may be too frightening to accept. A good example of suppressed differentiation is to be seen in the child's insistence on his parent's goodness and power, often, in spite of many obvious proofs to the contrary. To conceive of his parents, on whom he is dependent,



as being confused and weak in a terrifying world may be just too much for the child to take. In these terms one can well understand his protests at suggestions which imply his parent's weakness.

Persons who feel threatened by suppressed differentiations are often highly disturbed at the idea of being alone and seek one activity after another in an almost frantic effort to keep from giving attention to themselves and their problems. This seems to be an attempt to prevent low-level differentiations from becoming clearly (and so, more threateningly) defined. By maintaining a high degree of attention on other things it is possible, momentarily, to avoid the threatening perception. When attention lags, however, the need of the individual to maintain and enhance himself brings these differentiations into figure. Persons caught in this merry-go-round remind one of the policemen at the parade who keep pushing the spectators back only to have them press forward again sometimes one at a time and sometimes in whole batches at once.

The following case of Nancy summarized from the files of a Mental Hygiene Service illustrates this effect. As a girl, Nancy was very tall and not very attractive to boys. In addition, her family were well-known "intellectuals" who taught their children the importance of being *controlled*. As a result, Nancy grew up with the idea that she was something very special in womanhood destined for great things and several cuts above the ordinary female. This concept of herself was very reassuring and gave her a good deal of self-esteem while she was growing up. When Nancy married a man who was also an intellectual she considered herself extremely fortunate, particularly since he was very proud of her in her job. All went well with this sort of arrangement until Nancy discovered she was pregnant. This was a very threatening perception and she refused to accept the idea. Up to the day the baby was born, Nancy never mentioned her condition or made any attempt to prepare for the baby; she merely redoubled her efforts on her job. But babies have a way of arriving in time and she could not forever deny its existence. With the coming of the baby, she was faced with an even worse threat to her concept of herself and to her hopes of enhancing it. She had to give up her job to care for the child. Who ever heard of intellectuals who washed

dishes, or nursed babies, or made beds? Such ideas were completely foreign to the kind of person she thought herself to be. As a result her child was rejected and Nancy began a whirl of activity that kept her busy from morning till night. She could not stand being with other women who talked about their children. She no longer had her work to give her self-esteem and she could not achieve it at home. So Nancy neglected her housework, put her child in a nursery school and became a well-known public speaker in her community. She became a veritable dynamo of energy, racing about from meeting to meeting until at last her physical resources gave out and she collapsed in "nervous exhaustion."

#### RESTRICTION OF THE FIELD UNDER THREAT

A third psychological factor controlling the differentiations the individual can make will be the area of the phenomenal field available for differentiation at the moment. Under a very high degree of pre-occupation with a particular goal, for instance, the area of the phenomenal field open to differentiation may be quite narrow, and perceptions will then be confined to this fairly limited area. A commonplace example may be seen in our failure to differentiate the clock ticking in a quiet room. As our attention wanders from the book we are reading we may suddenly become aware of the ticking which has certainly been available for differentiation all the time. As we narrow our field again to our book the perception of the clock tick is no longer a major part of our field. This narrowing of the field is often to be observed in clinical work as well. Clients are often found who are so anxious to achieve a particular goal that they repeatedly rush blindly straight for it, being unable to perceive any more adequate manner of approach. They are like the chicken, so intent on reaching the food dish on the other side of the fence, that it keeps sticking its head through the wire instead of going around the barrier. In the same way, people who strongly desire respect may brag too much and so lose the very acclaim they seek. Had such persons been under less pressure they might have been able to perceive more satisfying though less straightforward techniques to achieve their goal.

This narrowing of the field is particularly likely to occur when the individual feels he is threatened. The effect has sometimes been called "tunnel vision" and operates to narrow the field of perception to the threatening object. Thus the presence of perceptions threatening to the phenomenal self may bring about an absorption with the problem such that the individual sees his problem everywhere. It has often been observed that neurotics are extremely egocentric. With the phenomenal self under threat, it is not surprising that the self should be the focus of interest. With the phenomenal self under threat, he *must* be concerned with himself. Show such a person a picture of your rowboat and it reminds him of his uncle's yacht. When the professor speaks in generalities, such students are certain the professor is talking to them. Nor is this effect confined to the non-scientific. Even psychologists have problems which are threatening and they must be continually cautious lest, in interpreting case histories or projective tests, they see in their clients their own unsolved difficulties.

Unfortunately, the restricting effect of threat in the phenomenal field simply complicates the resolution of problems. For adequate perception, we need, not a narrow field of differentiation, but a broad one. Too narrow a field from which differentiations may occur results in repetitions of the same behaviors time after time. The possibility of new, more adequate perceptions may be obviated by the narrowness of the field at the very moment when a wider field is desperately needed.

#### THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

The operation of the factors contributing to inadequate perception often lead to the permanence of behavior patterns in what has been called "The Vicious Circle." A phenomenal self which cannot accept the perceptions of a social situation, for example, often leads to behavior not acceptable to the culture which in turn forces the organism to greater defense of its position. The more violent the perceived attack the keener is the necessity for defense of the self. Furthermore, since it is often true that "the best defense is attack" the aggression of the society against the individual may result in aggression of the indi-

vidual toward the society or its members. This happens so frequently that in social psychology the principle that aggression results in return aggression has become almost a law of behavior.

One of the clearest examples of this vicious circle in operation may be observed in the psychological clinic in children who feel more or less rejected by parents. The child who has developed a concept of himself for one reason or another as being unwanted, unloved, and unappreciated becomes aggressive toward his parents and seeks to regain his self-esteem by punishing them or in some way demonstrating mastery over them. In this project he may utilize a very wide variety of techniques such as bed wetting, temper tantrums, negativism, or the like. Parents, however, may be disgusted, shocked, or angry at such behavior and punish the child in an attempt to bring him to conform to the patterns of behavior they expect. From his point of view the threat inherent in the perception of his parent's behavior does not permit him to see the situation as they do. Their punishment is likely to appear only as further proof of what he already feels. This threat to his phenomenal self forces him to defend his position and his concept of himself is more firmly entrenched than ever. Thus, he is driven to greater efforts in his attempts to gain a feeling of self-esteem which again may result in punishment and so the cycle may be repeated over and over.

The resolution of this vicious circle situation appears to lie either, in some shift in the situation such that the self-concept will be less under threat, or in aiding the individual to make some change in his self-concept which will serve to make it more adequate to deal with the present situation. Thus, a delinquent may be treated by placing him in the more or less psychologically sheltered atmosphere of a foster home or by helping him to a new concept of himself capable of accepting his parent's behavior.

#### TENSION AS A FUNCTION OF GOALS AND TECHNIQUES

In Chapter V we have observed that the most important differentiations in the phenomenal field were the phenomenal self, goals, and techniques. Many of our tensions appear to be due to the inadequacy of differentiation of goals and techniques for the particular setting in

which we happen to be operating. The goals and techniques we differentiate in any situation must lead us to need satisfaction. If they do not, they are inadequate. Inadequate differentiations result in inadequate behavior. Inadequate behavior in turn does not contribute fully to the satisfaction of need. In fact, inadequate behavior may, on many occasions prevent realization of need satisfaction. Let us see how this operates in a common setting. Let us assume that to satisfy need George Smith must feel accepted by a group. George may differentiate as a goal to accomplish this end making people laugh and being the life of the party. If he also differentiates as a technique to accomplish this goal, the playing of practical jokes on every one present or insulting the members of the party, he may very soon discover that he is not achieving his goal at all and so need satisfaction is absent. If he persists in this behavior too long, he may even find himself rejected by the group rather than being accepted. The inadequate differentiation of goals has resulted in the failure to obtain need satisfaction. The consequent feeling of inadequacy is threatening to the individual and he is likely to feel under considerable tension.

The same principle holds true with respect to techniques. The differentiation of techniques inadequate to the situation in which he finds himself is likely to result in behavior which fails to provide need satisfaction. The student who desires good grades, for example, sooner or later discovers that a technique of repeatedly "showing up the prof." does not lead to that end.

While the inadequate differentiation of goals and techniques often contribute to the failure of need satisfaction and build up tension in the individual, they are not likely to bring about persistent tension states over long periods of time unless they are closely related to the phenomenal self. If goals or techniques are not differentiated as part of the phenomenal self they are much less stable and are fairly easily changed. When one differentiation of goals does not work it is quite likely to be quickly replaced by another even within the same external situation. The same is true of techniques. One individual may be observed to shift his techniques very rapidly in the course of a very few minutes from jollyng the hostess, to expressing concern over the dog's sore foot, to turning on the radio, to straightening his tie, and so

on. This fairly unstable character of many goals and techniques makes them less likely of fixation and hence, less often the source of persistent states of tension.

#### THE PHENOMENAL SELF UNDER THREAT

Of much more importance in the creation of tension and threat for the individual is his phenomenal self. It is this highly stable complex of differentiations which each of us is constantly attempting to preserve and enhance. If behavior represents the interaction of the phenomenal self and the external world as it is perceived by the behavior, whether or not he is able to achieve satisfaction of need will depend upon the adequacy of his perception of self, the world about him, and the interrelations of these two. But, we have also seen that the perception of the external world is deeply affected by the phenomenal self. The differentiation of the phenomenal self thus becomes crucial in behavior and governs in very large measure the degree to which need satisfaction is possible to the individual. Let us take an example to illustrate this point. If Mr. Smith regards himself as a very unworthy person he may try very desperately to achieve some degree of self-esteem through his business, his play, and even in his family circle. He constantly seeks the esteem of others and is a tireless worker to this end. Interestingly enough, this tremendous energy may actually make him an extremely valuable member of his community. He is likely to be the kind of man who can be depended upon to work "like a fiend" on a project. Mr. Smith may also engage in a good deal of show-off behavior. He likes people to know of his accomplishments. He talks a good deal about himself. From his own point of view, however, he sees himself as a very unworthy individual although no one could ever get him to admit it. To himself, his failures stand like a sore thumb. When he is criticized he may even take it without comment believing such criticism is only too deserved. While other people may eventually come to regard him as a very successful man, Mr. Smith may never see himself in this light at all. On the contrary, his successes may be perceived as failures and he may be quite sure that people wouldn't really think that way about him "if they ever knew the truth." He may even live in horror that some day people may

really discover it and may surround himself with all manner of protective devices to keep people at a safe distance. Indeed, some such pattern seems only too common among some of our most "successful" people. An inadequate perception of self leads directly to inadequate perception of "the facts." An inadequate differentiation of the phenomenal self may make need satisfaction unlikely and so contribute to the individual's feeling of being threatened. The feeling of threat as a result of inadequate differentiation of self has important implications for personality theory.

#### THE IMMEDIACY OF THREAT TO SELF

In this discussion we have treated the phenomenal self and the self-concept for purposes of simplicity as though these were unitary concepts. It will be recalled, however, that the phenomenal self is a complex organization of perceptions about self. As an organization it is composed not of one, but of many self-definitions of varying degrees of importance to the individual. All levels of differentiation may exist in a particular phenomenal self at one time or another and will have varying degrees of importance for the individual in the maintenance and enhancement of his phenomenal self.

The degree of enhancement or threat experienced by the individual in connection with the satisfaction or lack of it of need will depend upon the aspect of self in play at the moment and the importance of this aspect in the total organization. We might diagram this as in Fig. 5. The closer to the center of this figure an enhancing or threatening differentiation occurs the more vividly it will be experienced. Events occurring in the phenomenal field at point A and perceived as having little or no relation to self will be experienced as little more than passing observations.

Such a perception might be my observation in the evening paper that Mr. Joseph Alexander has been elected county coroner in Ashtabula County, Alabama. This perception will be only momentarily in

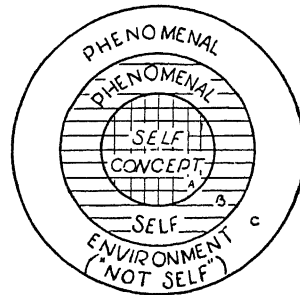


FIG. 5.

figure and neither enhances nor threatens my organization in any great degree. A differentiation at point *B*, however, will affect me much more deeply. Conceiving of myself as an American, as a liberal, as a Democrat, and as having a personal stake in some of his reforms, I may read of the death of the president or the election of *my* candidate and be considerably threatened or enhanced respectively. This event affects me, personally. A differentiation made at point *A* will threaten or delight me even more. Let us suppose that I conceive of myself as a successful politician. This is a very vital aspect of myself and when I am informed that I have been elected or defeated for office the experience will be very vivid for me. I may feel extremely elated or extremely dejected by the news. The degree of self-enhancement or threat which the individual feels will depend upon his perception of the relation of such differentiations to himself.

The business of need satisfaction in which the individual is unceasingly engaged involves a continuous process of behavior in terms of the perceptions he is able to make. Differentiations perceived as leading to self-enhancement result in behavior directed toward the achievement of such differentiations. Differentiations perceived as threatening to the self result in behavior to protect the organism from the danger it perceives. But at any moment any number of differentiations may be more or less sharply in figure and may be perceived as more or less enhancing or threatening to self. The individual is thus constantly reacting to such differentiations as his phenomenal field changes from moment to moment and as he continuously moves toward need satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Observing this behavior externally we might say that the individual is engaged in a continuous process of making "choices." As a matter of fact, no choice whatever exists. He attempts that which appears to him self-enhancing and attempts to avoid that which appears to him as threatening. What he does is dependent upon the differentiations he can make in his phenomenal field. Ordinarily this process occurs with a minimum of disturbance to the organism. It is seldom clearly differentiated by the individual. Occasionally two or more differentiations may appear in the field and the individual may, himself, describe the situation as making a "choice." If we could see the situation as he saw it at the moment of his behavior we would probably discover that he made no "choice" at all but behaved as he had to behave to maintain or enhance his phenomenal self. The term "choice" is a term from an external frame of reference which the individual may use in describing his behavior because,



## MULTIPLE ENHANCING PERCEPTIONS

The fact that the self-concept has many aspects frequently makes the satisfaction of need a difficult matter. For differentiations leading to enhancement of one aspect of the self may at the same time threaten other aspects. As Gardner Murphy has stated it, "It is actually a curtailment, a mutilation of the self, to give up something on which we have set our hearts; the self is the poorer." As a result the person shows signs of tension arising from the threat he perceives. The more seriously the self is threatened by such differentiations the greater will be the individual's feeling of threat and distress. As Murphy (138, page 301) has observed ". . . the very activity which brings us one satisfaction reminds us constantly that it is depriving us of another—and this is especially true of ego values." This is nicely illustrated in the case of a young minister we have known. This young man came to conceive of himself as a successful preacher and as a scholar. He made a very brilliant record in theological seminary and, indeed, in that situation he was both an excellent preacher and scholar. When he came to accept his first charge in a small community, however, he was almost a total loss to his congregation. His talents as a scholar were completely unappreciated. His most eloquent addresses went for nothing. In that community, to be considered an excellent preacher required a homely non-scholarly approach. The poor man became more and more distraught at his lack of success and was at a loss as to how to deal with it. Unfortunately, his concept of himself as a scholar brought about a reaction to him in that community which belied and threatened his concept of himself as a speaker. Similarly, if he had been a good preacher in that community, his concept of himself as a scholar would have been threatened. This type of threatening situation is sometimes described as "conflict."<sup>2</sup>

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when he looks at his own behavior he is making an external observation too. As he attempts to look back at his behavior, it looks to him as though he made a "choice" just as it may have appeared to others observing his behavior.

<sup>2</sup> It should be pointed out that the term "conflict," like "choice," is a term of external description. Indeed, conflict is but a form of "choice" under stress. The individual, however, does not experience conflict. He experiences threat to need satisfaction. The threat experienced is always a function of the perception as related to need satisfaction. He experiences threat to self maintenance

When two differentiations are perceived to be enhancing to the individual and can be achieved simultaneously, or in rapid order, little or no feeling of threat is likely to be experienced by the individual and he operates to realize the enhancement perceived. If, however, the realization of the two differentiations about self are not simultaneously or in quick order capable of realization a very great degree of threat to need satisfaction many ensue. This is especially true where the realization of one may force the abandonment of another. The instant one is abandoned, it becomes threatening to need satisfaction and demands attention. This enhancing differentiation which is realized satisfies need, but the enhancing differentiation not realized threatens the self greatly. A good example of this sort of thing is to be observed in the young woman in love with two men. Conceiving of herself as being loved by A and loved by B is enhancing to self. To marry either A or B, however, immediately threatens self with a loss of the other. This is threatening and must be avoided until A or B is perceived as more enhancing than the other.

The individual is constantly seeking self-enhancement. When self-enhancement can be achieved equally well through either of two goals, movement toward goal No. 1 means abandonment of goal No. 2. The instant goal No. 2 is relinquished, however, the individual is threatened by its possible loss. Since he desires goal No. 2, however, he moves to recapture it and now may find the same situation reversed. As a result, he may vacillate back and forth between these two, never able to achieve either for the threat of the loss of the other.

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from one or more differentiations of his self which he is unable to accept at that moment. This is Lecky's (107) principle of *Self Consistency*. Such threatening differentiations may occur in rapid sequence and even be described by the individual as "conflict." In so doing, he is making an external observation of his behavior just as any outsider would. To state that the minister, in the example above, is in conflict with himself leads us to a ridiculous state of affairs. There is nothing conflicting about differentiating oneself as a good speaker and a scholar. Some of our most successful clergymen are both! Even in cases where two aspects of self appear to be in conflict it will usually be discovered that one of these aspects is considered to be *not self* threatening self. Where inconsistent definitions of self exist in the same individual, it will usually be observed that one of these exists only at a low level of differentiation. Antagonistic concepts of self cannot exist at high levels of differentiation at the same time unless one is regarded as *not self*. This is the sort of thing which occurs in dual personalities.

## MULTIPLE THREATENING PERCEPTIONS

An even more threatening situation exists when the individual has two or more differentiations, all of which are highly threatening. For the sake of simplicity, let us suppose that only two such perceptions occur. In this situation the individual has no opportunity for self-enhancement whatever. He is only threatened and, of necessity, must defend himself. This seems to be characteristic of many neurotics. An excellent example is to be observed on any college campus in what is sometimes called, "term-end-neurosis." The student who begins to feel failure bearing down on him is faced with two negative differentiations each of which is threatening. To stay at college and fail is unthinkable. It threatens his concept of himself. On the other hand, to withdraw from college and go home to face his parents and their expectations is also unacceptable. He is a failure if he remains; he is a failure if he leaves. Either situation is intolerable and threatening, but what is even worse, one or the other is inevitable. As the term progresses and the full realization of threat becomes greater, the necessity for defense of self becomes more pressing, and the student's activity becomes wilder and wilder. Effective study becomes impossible. Finally, the student may collapse before exams in "nervous exhaustion." This exhaustion is usually short lived because the moment the student arrives at home, he is met with the sympathy of parents, the reassurance of relatives, and exclamations of "Poor boy, he worked too hard!" The threat and tension under which he has been operating disappears. With a little rest he makes a quick recovery.

Still another seriously threatening situation may arise when one aspect of self becomes more clearly differentiated and is recognized as threatening to another highly differentiated aspect. Inconsistent concepts of self may exist in the same phenomenal field so long as both are not simultaneously in clear figure (107). The failure of inconsistent concepts of self to appear in clear figure simultaneously may be brought about in two ways. In the first place, the two concepts may be differentiated as applying to two different social situations. This is characteristic of the man who conceives of himself as a "good" and a "religious" man on Sundays, in Deacon's meetings, and on reli-

gious holidays but conceives of himself as a "good businessman" on weekdays. Sharp business practices, dishonesty, and even gambling may thus comfortably be engaged in on weekdays, while Sunday finds the same person sitting in a pew and piously following the dictates of his Sunday self-concept. To conceive of himself in his Sunday self-concept on Monday would prove extremely threatening to the weekday self-concept and so must be strongly resisted.

A second factor which prevents inconsistent self-concepts from appearing simultaneously is the fact that only one entity can be in figure at a time. So long as one perception remains at a low level of differentiation, it may not greatly disturb another. We have seen that differentiations may be kept at a low level if they appear too threatening to the individual. This is true of perceptions regarding the self as well. Many highly intelligent people are convinced that they cannot do mathematics. So long as they feel so, everything is fine—they don't have to. To recognize that one can deal with mathematics may face one with the necessity for doing distasteful and, so, threatening tasks.

#### THREAT FROM LOW ORDER SELF DIFFERENTIATION

When one concept of self exists at a low level of differentiation and is antagonistic to another clear definition of self the potentialities for threat are tremendous. If the individual behaves at some time in terms of his low-level differentiation he may find that he has committed an act extremely threatening to a more clearly differentiated aspect of self. Such an act may bring an inconsistent concept of self into clear and inexorable figure resulting in violent shock. The following case illustrates how this may occur. A young woman considered herself a "good Catholic" and conscientiously observed the rules of her religious faith. As she grew older, however, she desired more and more to marry but with very little opportunity to realize her goal. Finally, she met a man of her own religious faith who previously had been divorced. When he proposed she was delighted, and, although she understood the bans of her church against marrying a divorced person, she was so intent upon her objective that this disturbing thought never appeared in very clear figure. For a while after marriage things went well until one day a priest very clearly pointed out the position of the

church. This brought the entire question into clear and inescapable figure in which both aspects of self were threatened by what she had done. To give up her husband was a threat to her concept of herself as a married woman and to keep her husband was a threat to herself as a good and conscientious Catholic. She vacillated back and forth between these two concepts of herself. Finally, under the shock of the threats she felt the poor woman collapsed and had to be hospitalized.

A self under threat has no choice but to defend itself in one form or another. What is more, the very existence of threat makes the solution of problems more difficult. To resolve a threatening situation requires exactly the opposite of suppression and tunnel vision. It requires freedom to examine and to differentiate any and all aspects of the field in the search for a more adequate self.

### WHAT IS AN ADEQUATE SELF?

#### THE ADEQUATE SELF DEFINED

An adequate phenomenal self is one which leads the individual to maximum need satisfaction. The individual who is achieving need satisfaction will be happy, effective, and comfortable with himself. He will be under a minimum of tension and will feel adequate to the demands made upon him. Since he is dependent in large measure upon his relationship to his environment, this can only be true if the phenomenal self he possesses is adequate to deal with the environment as he perceives it. Anything less will lead the person into threat and a failure of need satisfaction. Since the environment is constantly changing and is always partially under control, the individual's phenomenal self must be adequate to accept the perceptions of his environment as it relates to his phenomenal self. Lecky (197) first discussed this concept of an adequate self as a self-consistency. Rogers (1964, page 364) later expanded on this concept and has stated the case as follows: "It would appear that when all of the ways in which the individual perceives himself—all perception of the qualities, abilities, impulses, and attitudes of the person, and all perceptions of himself in relation to others—are accepted into the organized conscious concept of the self, then this achievement is accompanied by

feelings of comfort and freedom from tension which are experienced as psychological adjustment." . . . "The definition of adjustment is thus made an internal affair, rather than dependent upon an external reality."

We have seen, however, that the phenomenal self resists change, and a self which is all things at once or in rapid succession would not lead to need satisfaction. On the contrary, it would bring the individual constantly under threat and would result in making him less adequate to deal with his environment rather than more so. An adequate self must therefore be so organized as to permit the admission of all experience of external reality. Not all experience of reality is, however, of equal importance to the individual. Many things which occur to him are by no means perceived as greatly affecting his need satisfaction. A plumber coming to fix the radiators in our play therapy room, for instance, was shocked to discover the freedom permitted our young clients. The idea of permitting a child to wet on the floor was completely repugnant to him, and he criticized our "damfool" notions in no uncertain terms. This attitude on the part of the plumber bothered us very little. Had the same ideas been expressed by an honored and respected colleague, our reaction would have been very different. We do not care much what a plumber thinks of our professional techniques; we care very much what some psychologists think.

In the light of these observations we may define an adequate phenomenal self as follows: *A phenomenal self is adequate in the degree to which it is capable of accepting into its organization any and all aspects of reality.*<sup>3</sup> It must be evident that, on the basis of this definition, no phenomenal self is ever completely adequate, for adequacy is a function of degree. The phenomenal self may be more or less adequate; it can never be completely so.

The individual is constantly selecting his perceptions. Indeed, his phenomenal self is a product of such selection. We have seen that the phenomenal self, once established, governs in large part the perceptions which a person experiences. A phenomenal self which cannot recognize or admit a perception into figure must necessarily be unable to deal with such perceptions satisfactorily. If one is unable even to

<sup>3</sup> Modified from Rogers (1964).

concede the existence of an idea, it can hardly be adequately dealt with. The failure of the individual to accept important differentiations into his personal organization is characteristic of persistent tension states. Such failures of acceptance and the consequent feelings of threat they entail are the outstanding aspects of the neurotic. The neurotic young woman who cannot accept herself as a woman will find herself continuously threatened by her perceptions of herself and her environment. Her behavior will be correspondingly inadequate to the life situations which she meets. So long as her differentiations of herself are inadequate, she will continue to remain under threat. Such failures to recognize and admit concepts into figure may, in extreme cases, result in cutting the unfortunate person off from his society altogether. This seems to be what occurs in some forms of the psychoses.

Not all aspects of the phenomenal self are equally important in the economy of the individual or to need satisfaction. Some aspects are always more easily given up or changed than are others. It would be easier for the present writer, for instance, to give up regarding himself as a smoker than it would be to give up regarding himself as a psychologist. The closer a deviant perception lies to that portion of the phenomenal self which we have called the self-concept the more difficult change is likely to be. Changes in the peripheral aspects of the phenomenal self are much less threatening than those occurring in the very core of one's being. Changes in the core of the self-concept are likely to make it necessary for the individual literally to fight for his phenomenal life.

#### THE ADEQUATE PHENOMENAL SELF AND SOCIETY

The definition of a phenomenal self we have constructed above is that of an adequate self for the individual from his own point of view. With a self such as we have described he will be comfortable with himself, adequate, and effective in satisfying his need. But no individual in our society lives alone. Whether or not he achieves need satisfaction is not dependent only upon himself, but upon his experience in interaction with his environment and society. Since the individual seeks need satisfaction always within a cultural framework, his

phenomenal self must be consistent with that portion of the culture important to him. In the final analysis, whether or not the achievement of an adequate phenomenal self is possible will depend not only upon the adequate differentiations of self but upon the adequate perception of "external reality" as well.

The adequate phenomenal self from *both* the individual's point of view and society's must necessarily be in touch with the expectancies of the members of the society in which he operates. These expectancies will vary considerably within a particular culture. What is expected of a child is considerably different from what is expected of an adult. Expectancies for men are different from those for women. What is expected of the banker is different from what one expects of the dog catcher. What is more, the amount of deviation permitted an individual before he is brought under social controls will vary widely within a particular culture. Women in our culture are permitted a good deal of experimentation and license in choosing clothing, but very little in choosing sex partners. The adequate differentiation and acceptance of such aspects of his world into the organization of the phenomenal self is a necessity, if the individual is not to find himself threatened by his environment and so made unhappy, uncomfortable, and ineffective in dealing with it.

Interestingly enough, an adequate phenomenal self in the terms in which we have described it will produce an individual who, not only satisfies his own need, but will operate to the ultimate satisfaction of his society as well, provided he is free of the limitations upon differentiation which we have discussed. An adequate phenomenal self in an individual free of restraint upon his differentiations and with the time to make them must of necessity operate to the eventual good of his society. This is a pretty big statement, but let us see why it seems to be true.

Every individual lives in and is dependent upon society. So long as his behavior is consistent with the expectancy of the members of society he operates smoothly and effectively and with a minimum of threat to himself from that society. The individual with an adequate phenomenal self will react quickly and easily to his society. Since he



is dependent upon his society in large part for his need satisfaction, he cannot operate in ways which would deprive him of it. When threats do occur from his society, he is capable of accepting them and modifying himself accordingly. This will be true, however, only as long as the organism (1) *is free to make any and all differentiations and* (2) *has a phenomenal self adequate to accept them.*

For every antisocial act there is a penalty imposed either by society or, worse still, by the individual himself. If he is free to make all differentiations, these penalties must necessarily be examined by him. Since need satisfaction requires the absence of threat, the likelihood of action being taken which results in greater threat is impossible. Note in the following transcript from non-directive therapy how in her attempts to find a solution to her problem a young woman examines and rejects behaviors unacceptable to herself and to society (34).

In the following case a college student who had not been doing as well as she expected had sought all sorts of answers in the course of her counseling. She consciously and clearly examined the possibilities of quitting school, of developing a "nervous breakdown," or running away, and eventually rejected all. Finally, she came to the counselor's office elated over a solution which went roughly as follows:

S: I'll drop some of the work I'm doing now. That will give me time to get good grades in the rest. Then, I'll come back this summer and make it up and be right up with my class in the fall. (Examining the plan from every angle, she left, still elated. Six days later she was back.)

S: I felt so good about that plan and then I didn't want to do it at all after I saw you. So, I decided, I'm going to get my work done—all of it.

C: You discarded your plan?

S: I feel more confident now. I'm going to get it done. That other decision—I really had a guilty conscience after I left you. I thought, maybe I'm just making excuses. That decision was just a way out. Just making the decision helped me. It affected me just the opposite. I felt terribly guilty.

C: You felt you were not being honest with yourself.

S: It taught me I'm no different if I'm slow. It's better that I do what I can and take the consequences. I decided that the next day and I haven't had the jerks since. (Client had had a severe shoulder tic diagnosed by her physician as chorea.)

C: You feel you must accept yourself then.

S: I do. I'm slow and average. Now I'm utilizing time I never did before. I feel more confident. This is the most difficult adjustment I've ever had to cope with. That other decision was just making excuses. It's unfortunate I'm slow but I'll just have to work harder. Since I've gotten through this I'm sure I can get through anything.

A similar excerpt involving possible suicide is presented on page 60. Note that differentiation and acceptance in both cases includes the social situation and that even the possibility of suicide, which removes the person from society, does not remove him from its controls. A social being must necessarily adjust to the demands of society or remove himself from it. If he identifies himself with society, he cannot deny it for to do that is to deny himself. Since he lives in and is dependent upon society for his welfare, his own maintenance and enhancement will lead to that of the members of society as well, providing he is free to make adequate differentiations and to accept these into his phenomenal self. Persons unable to differentiate freely or with an adequate phenomenal self are unsatisfactory either to themselves or society.

#### HOW AN INADEQUATE SELF DEVELOPS

In the paragraphs above we have described an adequate phenomenal self as one capable of accepting into its organization any and all experience of reality. To accomplish this requires a phenomenal self capable of change. The factors which produce an inadequate self, then, are the factors which operate to restrict change in the phenomenal self. Whether change in the phenomenal self is possible will depend upon whether a particular change is perceived by the individual as leading to greater need satisfaction. So long as the maintenance and enhancement of self is achieved by change, it will occur. When, however, differentiations begin to appear which threaten or destroy the possibility of need satisfaction, the organism has no choice but to resist such changes with every means at its command. Change in the phenomenal self then becomes unlikely or impossible. An adequate phenomenal self is one unthreatened by its perceptions; an inadequate phenomenal self is a threatened one.

## INADEQUACIES AS A RESULT OF NEED SATISFACTION

We have seen that the phenomenal self is the result of the individual's experience in interaction with his environment as he perceives it. Experiences which contribute consistently to need satisfaction will produce a phenomenal self adequate to accept its experience. Even more important, experiences contributing consistently to need satisfaction will produce an individual more capable of dealing with experiences that do not lead to need satisfaction. Why should this be so?

In the first place many experiences of being able to cope with life make any single threatening differentiation less likely to appear important to the individual in his total economy. That is, so long as the individual has many experiences of success, any single threat seems less disturbing. Many experiences of success buttress the phenomenal self against too great disturbance by any one threatening differentiation. In the second place, much experience of success is likely to result in a self-definition as a person who "can handle his affairs." This, in itself, makes the acceptance of threatening differentiations more possible (94).

On the other hand the person who has consistently experienced failure is likely to develop a phenomenal self inadequate to meet the threatening experiences to which he is exposed.<sup>4</sup> Since the need he is attempting to achieve is the maintenance and enhancement of his phenomenal self, threatening experiences result, not in change but, in the protection of self from change. An unchanging self is inadequate to the acceptance of threatening perceptions. The greater the threat perceived, the less the likelihood of change or even of tolerance of the threatening perception. What is more, the individual feeling threatened by many aspects of his experience finds new threatening situa-

<sup>4</sup> Cruickshank (47) for example found "normal" children characteristically gave many "don't know" responses in intelligence tests, while the retarded child "forced by past feelings of inadequacy, makes an answer for the sake of making an answer and feels thereby that he maintains his social equilibrium. The normal child can admit to himself and to the examiner who represents the social situation that he is inadequate in answering a specific problem situation. For him, the problem situation remains a problem situation *per se* not, as with the retarded child, another situation in which a felt personality inferiority is again demonstrated and in which it is necessary to fight for the status of the self-concept."

tions even more intolerable than an outside observer would judge them to be.

While threatening concepts are at first resisted by the phenomenal self, if these are repeated often enough, the individual may discover that he can best maintain himself by redefining himself to eliminate the threat. This he may achieve by redefining himself as "unable to do it," in which case even evidences of success may appear to him as threatening and so be rejected. This often happens with children who have had repeated experiences of failure in school. When Johnny Brown has had a great many experiences in failing to read and finds himself never able to measure up to the demands of those about him, he may discover that the best way of eliminating these threatening concepts from his field is to accept them. When this happens he may define himself as "unable to read" and thus avoid the threatening experience of failure. With such a concept he is likely to protest long and loudly that he cannot read and eventually may even convince his teachers of this fact and so not be called upon at all.

#### INADEQUACY AS A RESULT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Many inadequate phenomenal selves appear to result from a more or less sudden change in the character of differentiations in the field. A phenomenal self developed in a particular group situation may, after a period of time, become adequate to accept the experiences of the individual in that group. When, however, the group important to the individual changes in the way it treats him, the phenomenal self may no longer be adequate to accept such experiences and tension results at once. Under these circumstances the person no longer feels adequate and comfortable. He may even feel threatened depending upon the degree to which his new perceptions are unacceptable in his old frame of reference and the degree to which they are perceived as important. Such changes may occur slowly as in the case of the young man who conceives of himself as a "great man with the ladies," but who in reality is not. He may be led to act because of such a self-concept in ways extremely obnoxious to the fairer sex. His tales of his conquests, his condescending air, and his "freshness" may even eventually turn the eligible women from him. After numerous at-

tempts to get dates and a sufficient number of cool refusals coupled with a few occasions in which he is unable to find any companion for himself at all, our young man may begin to become quite conscious that something is wrong. Almost everyone has had experience with this sort of slow change in perception of life situations. The adolescent's changing perception of the reaction of those about him toward himself is a type of experience through which all of us have lived more or less painfully.

The group important to the individual may also change in a moment and sometimes very drastically. The loss of a marriage partner in an accident, for example, may suddenly confront the individual with perceptions extremely unacceptable and threatening. This sometimes happens when we change our jobs from one place to another. The present writer well remembers the shock of returning to graduate school as the lowliest of graduate students after a position of responsibility and authority in his home community. Such changes in the perception of life situations may suddenly present the person with concepts he cannot accept into his existing organization. We shall see later some of the ways in which the individual attempts to deal with such perceptions.

For the moment, however, it is important for us to recall that the production of new and inconsistent differentiations does not depend upon change in "real" situations alone. It is quite possible for such differentiations to arise although society continues to accept the individual on the same familiar basis. The pain experienced by many college students going home for the first time after a long period at college is a case in point. The treatment one gets from parents and friends is apparently no different than it has ever been, yet, the perception of this treatment may be radically changed and results in considerable anguish for the student. Similarly, the differentiation of a new idea may be an extremely disturbing and even threatening concept to the individual. Many a student confronted with the concept of evolution has found it extremely disturbing as it is perceived by him to be inconsistent with previous ways of thinking about self. This is likely to be even more difficult to accept when others whom one considers to be important accept the idea without batting an eye.

## ⌘ CHAPTER VIII ⌘

### *Techniques of Dealing With Threat*

IN the previous chapter we have tried to discover how persons become threatened. In this chapter, we shall explore some of the common ways in which threatened personalities attempt to resolve their difficulties. The individual faced with the necessity for dealing with threatened perceptions has three general methods by which he may attempt to resolve the threat he feels. These seem to be:

1. The phenomenal self may be reorganized to include the new differentiation.
2. Perceptions at any level of differentiation may be denied acceptance into the organization in one form or another.
3. Perceptions may be so selected or modified as to be consistent with the existing organization.

#### REORGANIZATION OF THE PHENOMENAL SELF

We have seen that the adequate phenomenal self is one which is capable of accepting any and all differentiations into itself. When a threatening differentiation can be so accepted, it no longer threatens. It is only those perceptions refused acceptance which continue to appear threatening. The inclusion of a new differentiation in the phenomenal self will necessarily result in some modification of the organization. Sometimes this will be very great, sometimes only very slight. The woman who conceives of herself as a "good" mother may find that she has behaved toward her children in a fashion very "bad" for them. This differentiation is threatening to her concept of self and will remain so as long as it exists in figure and is denied acceptance. If it is accepted into the organization, its inclusion necessitates a reorganization of self. In this case, it might result in such a definition

as "I am a good mother, but sometimes I make mistakes."<sup>1</sup> With this reorganization of self the differentiation is less threatening and can be handled effectively. What is perhaps even more important, future differentiations of like nature will not appear so threatening and behavior will consequently be more effective. Once a differentiation has modified the organization of the phenomenal self, future similar perceptions will not appear so threatening.

This method of dealing with threatening perceptions is likely, in the long run, to offer the greatest satisfaction to the individual. Unfortunately, it is not always possible, due to many of the factors we have been discussing in the previous chapter. Many times acceptance may be impossible for one reason or another. As a result, the individual must find other methods of protecting his organization from assault.

#### DENIAL OF PERCEPTIONS INTO ORGANIZATION

Among the most common techniques are those which the person uses to prevent a threatening perception from emerging into clear figure. This class of techniques appears to be divided into two general groups. In the first place, threatening perceptions may be suppressed to a lower and less threatening level of differentiation. Suppression is an extremely common technique engaged in by all of us in some degree every day. Distasteful perceptions are conveniently "forgotten," or reduced in importance in one form or another. It is extremely easy, for example, to "forget" to carry out the ashes, to "overlook" a task we would rather not carry out, or to be "so busy" we just couldn't get around to a matter we would rather not do in the first place. Often such techniques will prove highly effective in dealing with threatening perceptions. Unfortunately, if the perception is very threatening or very important to us, however, this method of dealing with threat may only postpone or make more difficult the eventual

<sup>1</sup> In the light of this reasoning, it seems likely that the emphasis upon childhood traumatic events and the very prevalent attitude of "blaming the parent" may actually have contributed to the very large numbers of mothers unable to make acceptances like the one above. Mistakes in child rearing have sometimes been painted so black that they become too threatening for parents to accept and thus contribute to the greater disturbance of parents. As one very wise parent-education director put it "Perhaps it's time we started reassuring parents that they *can* raise children."

solution to the problem. An important threat can be only momentarily denied by suppression. As we have observed, even though suppressed, the disturbing perception still lurks in the ground portion of the field and may rise into figure again when more pressing differentiations no longer hold attention.

In the second place, threatening perceptions may be denied acceptance by being relegated to the *not self*. This too is an extremely common device for dealing with threatening perceptions. It is seen in daily life in our bland assumption that new rules and regulations, "of course," do not apply to us. It may be observed too, in the phenomenon pointed out by Freud, that we observe in others the characteristics we deplore in ourselves. We may find it possible to deal with such threats by the common excuse that "It was not our fault." Often these techniques work very successfully. When perceptions are very important, however, they are likely sooner or later to be forced upon us in one form or another. Society will usually see to that. The person who feels too threatened by a perception about himself to be able to consider the concept may eventually be forced to do so when social pressures are exerted upon him.

Both of these classes of techniques may often be extremely effective for a while. Sometimes, too, they are extremely useful devices which protect us against many minor upsetting perceptions. When we "forget" a matter, for example, it may be that after a time the situation will change and it will no longer be necessary for us to remember anyhow. Or, when a disturbing thought about ourselves is relegated to someone else, we may discover at a later date that we have changed in the meantime and the threatening perception is no longer applicable. In either event, the situation has been met with a minimum of difficulty. We have successfully maintained our phenomenal selves intact. In more important threats to ourselves, however, we may not be so lucky and perceptions suppressed or relegated to not self may boom-erang to cause us trouble for long periods of time.

#### SELECTION OF CONSISTENT PERCEPTIONS

A third class of techniques for dealing with threatening perceptions is the selection of perceptions in such a way as to be consistent with



the existing phenomenal self. We have seen that this effect is characteristic of the phenomenal self. Perceptions threatening to self are so selected as to appear, not threatening, but even enhancing to the phenomenal self. This is the sort of thing that occurs when an insult is taken as a compliment. All of us use this technique day after day, so smoothly, that we even succeed in fooling ourselves. The student does not leave his work until the last minute because he doesn't want to study. Perish the thought! He leaves his work till the last minute because "there was just too much to get done," because "the fraternity had a house meeting," or because of any number of other more satisfying reasons. And this is true of professors as well. Students' papers may not get marked, not because the professor hates to grade papers, but because of the pressure of "important" work to be done, or the "need to take a day off now and then," or even because it doesn't really matter, "the students don't mind."

Another variant of this class of techniques may be observed in many of our behaviors wherein we attempt to "snow under" a threatening perception by a series of enhancing techniques that reinforce a damaged phenomenal self. This is the sort of thing that occurs when a man who has been insulted by his wife at breakfast, drives to work at breakneck speed, gets in an argument with his foreman, or "tells off" his best friend. He re-establishes his feeling of self-esteem by such techniques and counteracts the self-damaging perceptions forced upon him by his wife's derogatory remarks. A heavy dose of self-esteem can often go a long way toward restoring a damaged self to a feeling of adequacy. It is comforting and reassuring—and sometimes necessary—to emphasize our strengths in moments of weakness or inadequacy.

Like the techniques we have been speaking about in the section above, the selection of consistent techniques often prove to be quite satisfactory in handling momentary threats. They provide quick and easy means of dealing with situations without the inefficiency of becoming upset over them. On the other hand, when such techniques are used in matters of real importance to the individual, they can lead to threats more difficult to deal with than those from which they began. We shall see how this may occur later in the chapter.

COMMON TECHNIQUES OF DEALING WITH  
THREATENING PERCEPTIONS

Many of the common adjustment mechanisms ordinarily described from an external point of view, in a phenomenological system appear as techniques by which the individual attempts to resolve the threat he feels.

While it is difficult to transfer the concepts of one frame of reference to another these commonly accepted adjustment mechanisms lend themselves well to phenomenological interpretation. As a matter of fact, even though they have been described and used by the external approach to psychology, they are primarily phenomenological concepts. In a number of cases they were first described by Freud and his contemporaries who used them as phenomenological concepts that aided understanding of human beings for treatment purposes. In later years they have been lifted almost bodily into external approaches to psychology as useful descriptions although the explanation of the dynamics of their operation has been greatly revamped in the process. Let us examine some of these techniques as they appear in a phenomenological setting.

## NEGATIVISM

Among the most common of the techniques of dealing with threatening perceptions is the denial of such perceptions in one form or another in what has been called *negativism*. This is particularly common among children but often exists in adults as well. A self threatened by its perceptions, may deny the perception by simply refusing to enter the situation where such a perception is forced upon him. This is a very common technique in the industrial strike. In actual practice, however, it has great values beyond the mere refusal to accept disturbing differentiations. Negativism can often be used as a very positive device for control of other people. Thus a threatened self may be able, not only to deny the acceptance of a disturbing differentiation into its organization but may even be able to restore the self to a feeling of being adequate to deal with the situation presented. In this way a feeling of mastery may be obtained from one

element of the situation while at the same time avoiding consideration of another. For example, the young son of one of the authors, before going to bed this evening complained that it was much too early to retire. This was threatening to his concept of self. He attempted to point out to his father that it was unfair to expect him to go to bed when it was still light especially for such a big boy as he. When these arguments proved of no avail he rebelled and said "NO!" to brushing his teeth, washing his face, taking off his clothes, and picking up his toys. He even went so far as to say "No" when asked if he wanted to be read to (a decision he quickly regretted and only saved face at the last moment by changing his "no" to refer to his father and not his mother). Having been threatened by his parents' inability to regard him as he regarded himself and being overpowered by the might of adults, he sought a means of restoring his feeling of self-esteem by mastering his parents through negativism. Even as he said "No" while standing with his back to his father at the basin, his father could observe the delight written all over his face and betrayed by the mirror in front of the child. The enhancement of self achieved by such tactics is often far more pleasurable than the minor losses one may sustain by the negativism. This is true of adults as well. Strikers out for weeks for an extra cent per hour count nothing lost if in the end their negative tactics achieve their goal even though it may take years to recoup their losses on the new pay scale.

#### SIMPLE REGRESSION

Simple regressive techniques are often used in much the same way as are mechanisms of negativism. When perceptions are threatening many of us fall back upon techniques which have proved satisfactory in former situations. The housewife who formerly found her tears could change her mother's mind in moments of stress may utilize these again when her husband does not treat her in a manner to which she feels she is entitled. It is characteristic of our use of techniques that we utilize those that have led to self-enhancement in the past. We use repeatedly those that we have differentiated as "good" techniques for achieving need satisfaction. Many of these in a particular personality may exist for years. They are not labeled by the individual

as regressive, however. Such a description would be much too threatening. They are labeled as "regressive" only by outside observers looking on at a particular behavior pattern.

Sometimes, in children particularly, this method of dealing with threatening situations seems to involve more than just the use of techniques to reassure the self. In some cases it appears to exist as an actual redefinition of self as "younger." Many children, faced with the necessity for growing up, find the business of maturing extremely threatening. This may be particularly true when the child is subjected to a great many demands which are difficult for him to meet. The resulting feelings of inadequacy are threatening and the child appears to adopt a self-definition at a younger age as a means of excusing his behavior to himself and achieving the self-enhancement characteristic of former times. When one is younger he cannot be expected to do so much and the demands being imposed upon him appear less threatening. By defining one's self at a lower age the threats perceived can be given up—they no longer apply. The child who finds going to school threatening may thus regress to an earlier age level where one is not expected to go to school. At such a level he can feel adequate again. The toilet-trained child may lose his newly mastered skills with the arrival of another child or when subjected to such an upheaval as moving from one home to another. It may often be seen that children subjected to a great many demands in the early school years may show such regressive behavior. They may want to be rocked or sung to as a means of gaining comfort and reassurance that had value in other days. When demands become too heavy there is much comfort and reassurance in such redefinitions and many threatening situations can be avoided.

#### FANTASY

Various forms of fantasy may give similar feelings of mastery and offer opportunity for the self-concept to operate without the disillusioning impact of threatening differentiations. Daydreaming, movie going, some types of reading; all appear to derive their major satisfactions from this escape from threat. Such flights of fantasy are extremely common to all of us and appear to be primarily moti-

vated by our attempts<sup>\*</sup> to achieve some feelings of self-esteem or self-enhancement. In dreams we may be anything. We are released from the impact of external reality and are free to manipulate ourselves and the world about us as we choose. This manipulative function of fantasy is extremely useful to us and shades almost indistinguishably into planning. Children frequently employ this device as a means by which the environment can be manipulated and controlled, and fantasy undoubtedly has vast implications for the child in assisting him to find meaning in the world about him. In play therapy, for example, a child may be observed to spend hours manipulating various elements of his environment with which he may be having unusual difficulty. In the process he may discover new ways of dealing with his environment or new definitions of self more adequate to deal with the environment he faces.

While fantasy has value as a device for manipulation and for the achievement of self-esteem, it may also represent a clinically undesirable type of activity and it is necessary for the clinician to have some measure by which it is possible to determine when this "danger point" is reached. From a phenomenological point of view that point is reached when the individual finds withdrawal to the world of fantasy more real than his experience in an external world. The critical point is thus a matter of the attitude taken by the individual toward his fantasies. In extreme cases the threat resulting from the individual's perceptions may sometimes be so great as to leave him no other recourse but to cut himself off from external reality entirely to seek a more friendly environment in a world of dreams. There, he may divorce himself from threat and create a world which is far more pleasant.

But not all daydreams are pleasant. Sometimes they are reported as fantasies in which self-punishment is the major consideration. At first glance it would seem difficult to understand how such fantasies could contribute to the maintenance or enhancement of the phenomenal self. Yet this is exactly what seems to occur. In such apparently self-destructive fantasies we may often find the self-concept defined in a way which might roughly be described as "I am guilty." With such a self-concept it is not surprising that the individual may find

real satisfaction in berating himself in fantasy\*. It is what he deserves in his eyes. By atonement he achieves enhancement of self! Furthermore, there are certain advantages in such self-punishment for one can be punished to one's heart's content with a minimum of real danger to the self whereas if one sought punishment in the world of reality it is quite likely he would find his experience too threatening and out of his control.<sup>2</sup> The recognition by the individual of guilt and shame are ways in which he rises above his self. By such recognition he is enabled to feel superior to what he once was or has been. He achieves enhancement of self by thus dissociating from guilt and by punishing himself becomes the punisher rather than the punished. Thus behaviors which appear to the external observer to be operating against the individual's own best interests may be, from the behavior's own point of view, enhancing to self.

#### PROJECTION

A somewhat different but closely related technique of dealing with threat may be seen in the mechanism of projection. All of us behave in terms of our phenomenal selves but all of us, too, have come to differentiate certain techniques or goals as things to be avoided because we have experienced in one form or another the disapproval expressed by the culture in which we move. Such differentiations are threatening. Mr. Allen may feel extremely aggressive toward his wife and children but too aggressive behavior toward one's family is not permissible in society. The reaction of others is threatening when unacceptable feelings are expressed. Mr. Allen may therefore be found to find other means of expressing his feelings which mislead the external observer. If we place him in a situation where he is under no threat on the part of those around him or in which he may behave without restraint, however, it is likely that he will reveal much more of his real feelings to the eyes of a practiced observer. Thus he may be able to let himself go in a play because a play is "only an act,"

<sup>2</sup> It will be apparent to the reader that this offers some explanation for what Freudians have termed "masochistic tendencies." Seen in the light of our explanation, it does not seem necessary to postulate a self-destructive drive as an innate characteristic of the organism. Even the Japanese custom of hari-kiri saves face for the Japanese. By destroying himself he achieves honor, glory, and eventual mastery, or self-enhancement beyond anything attainable living.

or in telling of his childhood for "you can't blame a man for what he did as a child," or in telling a story for then "it is only a story." It is just this release from the restraints of objective reality that make projective instruments so revealing of the fundamental motivations of the person's personality.

But projection occurs not only on projective tests, it is often utilized by the individual in daily life. Through identification with others (and thus protection to the self) it may be possible to find vicarious pleasure or self-esteem in blaming others who do those things he would like to do himself. It may often be observed for example, that the too pious derive a most unholy glee from the torments of those they persecute. The guilty are often the most avid reformers. Criticizing behavior of others the person may be free to behave almost as he wishes without the threat of the cultural reaction to himself. With such threats removed he may be able to utilize techniques and ideas previously differentiated as things to be avoided at all costs. Projection gives the individual license to operate free of normal social controls (186, 66).

#### COMPENSATION

In compensation, the individual may make quite open and unrestrained attempts at mastery often with the full support and encouragement of the culture. In fact, in America we take much pride in our great compensators. We point out to our children from the earliest days of schooling the examples of Steinmetz, the hunchback; Cunningham, of the burned legs; Edison, the deaf; Lincoln, the poor; Demosthenes, the stutterer; and a host of others. No doubt we shall soon be doing the same with Roosevelt, the cripple. These we delight in setting up for our children as guideposts to great achievement and the implication is clear to "go and do likewise." We have succeeded so well in implanting this concept of compensation that it has even become a common notion that anyone who accomplishes something must certainly be a bit queer.

Compensation may appear in either of two common forms known as direct and indirect compensation. In direct compensation the individual attempts to achieve self-esteem or mastery by refusing to accept

the threatening differentiation. He denies that any handicap exists and acts accordingly. His phenomenal self is defined as though the handicap were not a part of himself. In so doing he must deny the proof to the contrary which appears in the reaction of others toward him. A young woman in a small Ohio town who severed the major nerves leading to her legs in an automobile accident the night before she was to have been married refused to accept the idea that she could never walk again. One of the authors vividly remembers this girl's pathetic efforts to force herself to walk in spite of her hopeless condition. She had a pair of parallel bars built on her porch and daily spent hours dragging her legs behind her as she went hand over hand along the bars. She refused to release her fiance from his promise because she could not accept the differentiation that she never would walk again. Nor would she marry him for that would not be fair to him until she was able to walk again. This state of affairs continued for several years until one day she released her fiance from his promise, gave up her attempts to walk and died within a very short time. Not all cases of direct compensation end so tragically by any means. Many people find it possible to make such improvement through the extreme efforts which such a technique can produce that eventually the threatening handicap may in fact be overcome.

In indirect compensation a person possessing a handicap may be driven to seek self-esteem in other areas entirely. Thus, a child who feels incapable of participation in the usual playground sports may find satisfaction in being the brightest child in class or the worst. Oftentimes, such compensatory behavior may be far more potent than behavior not so driven, for much more is at stake for the child. It is probable that the amount of energy expended in compensatory activity will depend upon the importance of the threatening handicap in the economy of the individual's particular organization. So long as the handicap cannot be accepted into his organization it remains threatening and disturbing to him. He must defend himself at all costs against the threat which he perceives. Nor does it matter whether the handicap is real or imagined from an outsider's point of view. If the perception exists in the field it is real to the behavior and that is the only point that matters to him. The more threatening



the perception, the greater the amount of energy which will be expended in attempting to deal with the problem.

In indirect compensation the individual has given up attempting to deal with the perception of his handicap directly. He recognizes that he is helpless before it yet cannot accept it as part of his organization. He attempts to rehabilitate his damaged concept of self by "snowing under" the threatening perception with a series of other enhancing perceptions. The girl who is homely may find solace and comfort in extraordinary achievements as a student, as an athlete, as a comic, or in any of a thousand other ways. Since the fundamental perception cannot be accepted, however, it remains in the field and continues to threaten, requiring ever new heights of accomplishment to give a feeling of adequacy. The moment lack of success in the compensating area is met, the non-accepted handicap comes to the fore and threatens the personality once again. It is only with continued success that the threat can be prevented from arising into figure. It is interesting that society often profits very greatly from the tremendous efforts put forth by such persons. Many compensators make great contributions in all walks of life. In spite of the external evidences of success, however, the compensating individual may feel extremely unhappy and inadequate in the very midst of his successes. It is only with the acceptance or elimination of the original handicap that real "peace of mind" can occur.

#### RATIONALIZATION

Rationalization appears to be the direct outgrowth of the selection imposed upon perceptions by the phenomenal self. We are ordinarily aware of our rationalizations only after they have occurred, if at all. The dynamics appear to operate somewhat as follows: The individual behaves in terms of his phenomenal field and, in particular, in terms of his phenomenal self. Acting in terms of one aspect of the phenomenal self, however, sometimes leads him into behavior antagonistic to another aspect of self. This is a threatening situation and must be dealt with in some fashion. Being unable to accept the threatening concept, the situation may be perceived as consistent with the self by selecting those aspects which are self-enhancing and ignoring those which are

not. He finds "good" reasons for the "real" reasons for his behavior. For instance, a woman goes shopping and finds two dresses in which she would be very attractive. She buys both dresses and thus achieves an enhancement of self. When friends remark "Oh you bought *two* dresses," this may represent a threat to her concept of herself as thrifty and our shopper replies "They were such a bargain, I couldn't resist them." Thus she achieves not only a dissolution of the threat but even an enhancement of self as a thrifty shopper who knows how to take advantage of a bargain.

Rationalization is so common that most of us are not even aware of the existence of such distorted perceptions. Even when they are brought to our attention it may be very difficult for us to accept them as rationalizations for to do so many threaten our existing organization. The man who buys a new car, for example, and gives as his reason for this behavior that the old one was beginning to use too much oil will probably object to our pointing out that the expense of twenty quarts of thirty-cent oil in a year's time hardly justifies an expenditure of a thousand dollars in turning the old car in. Such an admission is likely to be a threat to his concept of himself as a smart business man and furthermore may force the admission that the real reason for getting the new car is because it increases his self-esteem. To increase one's self-esteem is not a socially acceptable reason for buying a car. Such selective effects of the phenomenal self upon perception may be seen in thousands of daily acts among which the following statements represent but a few:

"Let's go to the movies. A fellows gets stale when he studies all the time."

"Who wants to be a Phi Beta Kappa—a bunch of greasy grinds."

"A little nip now and then is a good thing for a man."

"I paid more than ceiling price. Sure, but everyone's doing it."

It should not be supposed that the mere existence of any of the above techniques in a particular personality constitutes a pathological state. As a matter of fact many of these techniques contribute greatly to the efficiency of the organism in its daily operations. Without them, the individual would find that he was constantly so upset and disturbed by hundreds of minor threatening perceptions as to become an

extremely inefficient organism. On the other hand, any of these techniques in an extreme or when used to deal with a persistent and important threat may contribute to making the organism very ineffective and inadequate in dealing with his life problems. Any one of the techniques about which we have been speaking in this section in an extreme case might appear to outsiders as a pathological state. What produces an individual who is regarded by society as pathological is not the techniques he uses, but the extent to which he uses them.

## PHOBIAS AND NEUROSES

### PHOBIAS

A young man had a very severe phobia for knives. The very sight of a knife in the hands of another person was enough to make him extremely uneasy, sometimes to the extent of begging others to put the knife away. This fear was extremely embarrassing to him and often made him the butt of unpleasant jokes among his friends. The young man, himself, recognized that his fear was quite unnecessary and even extremely silly but at the same time he could not help feeling upset and frightened by the sight of a knife. He could not remember any good reason why he should be afraid of such things. All he knew was that he was afraid even though he was not quite sure of just what it was he feared so violently. This is a typical picture of a phobia. Such fears are characterized by an unreasonable dread attached to one or more fairly specific kinds of situations. Almost always, they are regarded as silly and unreasonable by the person who has the phobia and it is characteristic that he is quite unable to recall the origins of his behavior.

From a phenomenological point of view we may describe the object of the fear as a strongly differentiated negative goal. That is, the feared object has for one reason or another, been strongly differentiated by the individual as an object to be avoided at all costs. The threatening aspects of the situation which cause the person to be afraid, however, are not so clearly differentiated. The reason for this failure of differentiation appears to lie in one or both of two possibilities; First, the origin of the fear may have occurred so early in the

life of the individual that he did not possess the necessary symbols which would make its differentiation possible. A child, for example, frightened by some object might perceive it clearly but have no symbols in which to differentiate the guilt feelings which existed in the same situation. It is characteristic of phobias that they contain a very considerable element of such guilt feelings. Such feelings are extremely subtle, moreover, and to be able to differentiate them clearly requires an ability to deal with abstract symbols not possessed by the child until a later period.

A second possibility which may cause a threatening situation to fail of clear differentiation may be that the very perception of the situation is too threatening in its implications. To bring such a perception into figure in the field may, in itself, be so threatening to the organization of the phenomenal self that the individual cannot face the matter and resists bringing the situation into figure at all. In this way, a child whose parents have severely threatened him with a loss of their love and affection may find this idea so painful and threatening to his organization that he resists any tendency for that aspect of the situation to rise into clear figure. Let us see how these points apply to the case of the young man we mentioned above.

Under therapy the young man with the phobia for knives revealed this story of the origins of his strange behavior: As a young child he felt deeply rejected by his mother and felt a very great need for her love and affection. Unfortunately, this was not always easy to obtain because his mother was extremely critical, unpredictable, and often extremely "nervous." He had been repeatedly warned by his mother that under no circumstances was he ever to touch a knife. One day, however, this youngster overheard his mother complain that she did not have a sharp knife in the house. Desperately seeking to please her, he took several of her kitchen knives to the curb in front of the house to sharpen them. He looked forward to the commendation he would receive for his act. In the process of sharpening the knives however one of them slipped and nearly severed the child's finger. Attracted by his cries his mother rushed from the house in a panic, picked up the child and rushed him into the house, spanking him on the way and making it evident he was a *very bad boy*. She pointed out

in no uncertain terms that this would never have happened had the child done as he was told. All this made him feel terribly threatened. He felt he had committed an unforgivable sin which caused his mother to reject him. From this incident, knives were differentiated strongly for the child as objects to be avoided at all costs, but the concept of himself as guilty was by no means so clearly differentiated probably because he had no symbols in which it could be brought to figure and (or) because bringing such feelings clearly into figure would have represented an intolerable threat to his phenomenal self. In later life it was often necessary to use knives for one purpose or another. The young man was able to do this, although never without a vague feeling of anxiety. Although he regarded his fear as silly in a grown man, he could not avoid his uneasiness and was often driven to certain impulsive behaviors which he was quite at a loss to explain. When, in the course of therapy he was able to examine this early situation carefully and come to a clear differentiation of his feeling of guilt, he found he could accept the idea. As an adult he felt adequate to deal with the problem and when he had clearly differentiated the threatening situation was able to accept the perception into his organization. When this had occurred he lost his phobia completely.

#### NEUROSIS

The undifferentiated threat we have been discussing as characteristic of phobias is also the major characteristic of the neuroses. In fact, the primary difference between a neurosis and a phobia seems to lie in the fact that the threatening perception in a phobia appears primarily attached to one or more fairly specific objects or situations while in neurosis, the undifferentiated threat may be quite general. Maslow, (125) has called this undifferentiated threat a "catastrophic" threat and points out that it exists as a vague and undefined "dread of something" which the individual cannot put his finger on. It is this "catastrophic" character of the threat felt by the individual that separates the neurosis from other threatening situations. The threat felt by the individual is to the very core of his phenomenal self, to that part we have described as his self-concept. The threatened person is unable to discriminate clearly the threat which he vaguely perceives and is un-

able to accept the threatening differentiation into his organization of self.

From a phenomenological point of view such failure to discriminate may come about in either of the two ways we have previously discussed in our consideration of phobias. In the first instance differentiation may not occur because the individual does not have the symbols which make discrimination of the threatening situation possible. In the second instance, the clear differentiation of the threatening aspect may represent so serious a threat that the individual cannot face it. In a neurosis this threat may eventually become so extreme that it can no longer be clearly differentiated in the field. The threatening perception is suppressed to a lower level of differentiation and may become indistinguishable from the ground of the field. When this occurs, discrimination of the threatening aspect is no longer possible, and the individual acts as though he were threatened in a great many situations where neither he nor anyone else can clearly discern anything to be afraid of. What is more, since he feels constantly threatened, he will appear to others as tense and "emotional."

A very neurotic middle-aged schoolteacher came to a psychological clinic for assistance. She complained of constant tension, inability to sleep, vague aches and pains for which her doctors could find no physiologic reason. She found it necessary to dose herself with all manner of medicines and complained of being in constant dread of something which she could not define. She was unable to concentrate on her work and found herself extremely overemotional, laughing or crying almost uncontrollably on the slightest pretext. Under therapy the following facts began to emerge.

She had always been a very popular and good-looking young woman but was also under the domination of her mother to an extreme degree. As a result, although she had had numerous offers of marriage she was never able to bring herself to make the break from home. This state of affairs continued for some years until she began to be less attractive to men and her chances of marriage became fewer and fewer; finally she found herself forty years old with no one left. About then, her mother began to show definite signs of age and it became apparent to the teacher that the time was not far off when

she would be all alone in the world. She began to feel vague dreads of something she could not quite discern. Her behavior became compulsive and erratic and she felt constantly tense and uneasy. About this time her principal, a married man of her age, began to show her marked attention and finally asked for a date. The two became more and more intimate. Other people began to become suspicious and the threat of scandal and loss of position made matters even worse. The teacher became more and more frantic and more and more "neurotic" in her behavior.

In the course of counseling with this teacher it became clear that she reveled in the attentions she received from her principal although she knew full well the price she might have to pay for her clandestine affair. These aspects of her situation were clearly and sharply differentiated. Her feeling of guilt with respect to the possibility of breaking up her principal's family was similarly clearly perceived in her field. In spite of this, she still felt that she could not give him up and continued to feel anxious and tense although somewhat less than previously. She acted like a schoolgirl. She was radiantly happy in her intrigue and her mannerisms and affectations were those of a woman of twenty although she was twice that age. She was violently opposed to revealing her true age, went to football games and parties with teachers half her age while at the same time speaking of people of forty as "old fashioned" and severely criticizing her contemporaries on the job. She acted twenty because she regarded herself as twenty. She conceived of herself as still young, attractive, and desirable and this led her to behave in ways often ludicrous to external observers. With such a concept of herself, she could not give up her lover for he probably represented her very last chance. To give him up would mean resigning herself to being an "old maid," would mean acceptance of herself as growing old. This was the vague dread that she could not face. With such a self-concept she was beset on all sides with proof from the world about her that her concept of herself was just not so. She was kept so busy defending herself from the various onslaughts on her established position that change became impossible while external reality became more and more pressing. The threat became larger and larger, becoming so much a part of her field that

she acted fearfully in many situations, even those having no apparent connection with her dilemma.

To examine the dynamics involved, let us reduce this case to its basic elements. This woman conceived of herself as a teacher, which occupation was absolutely essential as a means of supplying a way to live. She regarded herself, also, as desirable, as young, as marriageable, and as essentially moral. She needed also to maintain and enhance these self definitions. But behavior which led to enhancement of one important aspect of self as young and as desirable faced her at once with the terribly threatening perception of being immoral and even of losing her job. To give up her man was equally intolerable and threatening. At the same time external events were pressing for a showdown. She felt more and more threatened. What is more, the threat she felt made the broader examination of her field impossible so that no solution was perceptible anywhere. Since the perception of a solution was impossible, obviously, none could occur.<sup>3</sup>

The major characteristics of this case are almost identical with the picture presented in the results from "experimental neurosis" studies. Shaffer (189), for instance, summarizes these results as follows: "First, the animal becomes unable to discriminate, losing even the older more habitual differentiations that have been formed previously. Second, he shows an irrational spread of response salivating for stimuli only incidentally connected with his training. Third, the animal gives evidence of tension and of emotional responses." . . . "The same characteristics are seen in persons who are neurotic, unintegrated and predisposed to maladjustments." It is probably no accident that all of the work in "experimental neurosis" from Liddell's (117) sheep, and Pavlov's (142) dogs, to Krasnogorski's (102) children, show "neurosis" occurring when discrimination of adequate response is impossible. In most of these cases the failure to make adequate discriminations was due to the manipulation of the environment such

<sup>3</sup> We need go no further with this case for our present purposes. The sensitive reader, however, may be concerned to know the outcome of the case in therapy. In the sheltered non-threatening atmosphere of non-directive therapy, the client came eventually to accept a new self-definition as no longer young. She gave up her clandestine affair, requested a transfer to another school and found a whole new series of satisfactions in helping children through remedial reading, by participating in community affairs, and service as a nurse's aid.



that the subject could not make such differentiations. Maier's (123) refinement of first making the discrimination impossible and then *forcing* his rats to do something, by subjecting them to a blast of air, is not far different from the case we have cited above in which our schoolteacher was unable to discriminate what she could do but was forced increasingly to do *something*. The fact that "experimental neurosis" experiments prevent discrimination by a manipulation of the environment does not seem greatly different from "clinical neurosis" in which differentiation in the phenomenal field may be impossible for the subject. In "clinical neurosis" differentiation may be made impossible by environmental conditions but may also be prohibited by the restricting effects of threat upon the area of the phenomenal field open to differentiation.

In the light of this discussion let us attempt to state the dynamics of neurosis as they appear in a phenomenological setting:

1. One or more major aspects of the phenomenal self become severely threatened either (a) by the perception of external events or (b) by the perception of the individual's own behavior motivated by another aspect of self.

2. The threatening perceptions cannot be accepted into the personal organization and are repressed to a lower level of differentiation.

3. Such suppressed differentiations, since they threaten major aspects of self, continue to be threatening in the field. The need of the organism to maintain its phenomenal self will not permit threatening perceptions to exist in the field without solution.

4. Suppressed differentiations existing in the field continue to motivate behavior as part of the ground of the field. Such threats are perceived by the individual as vague and persistent. His behavior is tense and emotional. The greater the perceived threat the more "emotional" the subject's behavior.

5. The greater the threat to the phenomenal self, the more the field is restricted to the threatening differentiation.

If this analysis is correct, it follows that the most successful treatment of the neurotic is likely to involve:

1. Reducing the individual's feeling of threat so that differentiation can occur from a wider field

2. Assisting the subject to make adequate differentiations of self and external reality.

3. Creating a situation in which acceptance and reorganization of self to include the threatening differentiations is possible.<sup>4</sup>

The matter of the proper classification of the neuroses has been a knotty problem for both psychologists and psychiatrists for a very long time. Many writers have attempted to classify these behaviors with very little success. Indeed, the American Psychiatric Association has had committees working on this problem for years. As Maslow (124) has pointed out most of these classification systems "are based either on striking symptoms or on the causes of the patient's condition, or both. Thus the syndromes 'anxiety hysteria,' 'obsessional neurosis' and 'manic-depressive psychosis' are based on striking symptoms whereas 'cerebral arteriosclerosis' and alcoholic psychosis are classified on the basis of the chief cause of the disturbance." This attempt to approach the problem of classification has led us into great confusion. To attempt a classification upon the basis of physical cause may work satisfactorily where such causes exist. However, the great majority of the neuroses present no consistent etiology of physical disturbance. If we attempt to classify this great majority on the basis of the symptoms with which they are accompanied we have succeeded in doing little more than calling people names. Certainly, such descriptive classifications are of little use in therapy, unless therapy is to be concerned only with the superficial treatment of symptoms. Symptom diagnosis tells us little or nothing of the *causes* of the neuroses. It is our feeling that the real causes lie within the organism, in the meaning of the individual's behavior for him. The same symptoms in different individuals may arise from very different meanings or the same meaning even in the same person may conceivably result in very different symptoms at different times.

#### THE PSYCHOSES

The same difficulties of classification have beset workers with the more serious types of maladjustment, the psychoses. Although space does not permit us to discuss these disorders fully in a volume devoted

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter XIV.

to the outline of a theoretical framework, we may point out here a few of the major implications of a phenomenological approach for these interesting types of behavior.

In the various forms of psychosis, as in any other type of behavior, the fundamental drive of the organism is always the maintenance and enhancement of the phenomenal self. Like other threatened states, these more serious disturbances arise from the individual's attempts to deal with the threats he perceives. The difference between the psychoses and the less serious neuroses lies in the degree and extent of threat to the organization of the phenomenal self and the techniques by which the individual attempts to resolve the situation. Let us examine briefly how the point of view of this volume applies to some of the most common types of psychoses. It should be understood by the reader that these descriptions are offered as no more than thumb-nail sketches of types of disturbances which are actually extremely complex. In a sense these may be regarded as "pure cases" extracted for purposes of our examination with the understanding that such pure cases probably never occur in practice. We present them here only to illustrate their interpretation in phenomenological terms and to suggest possible new ways of seeing these disturbances which might lead to fruitful investigation.

#### MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES

In the previous chapter we have seen that the phenomenal self is composed of many self-definitions. We have observed too, that behavior resulting from one concept of self may be unacceptable and threatening to another aspect of self. This appears to be illustrated in an extreme form in what are often described as multiple personalities. One of the authors recalls working with a little girl, named Helen, who had developed another personality, Marie. Helen was an extremely "good" child who always did as she was told. She was in every way a delightful child from an adult point of view. Marie, on the other hand, was a "naughty" girl who said "bad words," who sometimes wet her panties, who slapped her little brother, and who was generally responsible for most of the quarrels among the children of the neighborhood. This dual personality had been brought on by the birth of

Helen's little brother and the child's consequent attempts to gain self-esteem. Finding herself no longer the "apple of her parent's eye," she sought to achieve self-esteem in new ways. These attempts were met by her shocked and horrified parents with many statements that she was a "bad" girl and were accompanied by moralistic reproof and severe punishment. Such proof of her immorality could not be accepted by Helen who had always regarded herself previously as a "nice" girl. Yet the proofs could not be done away with. Her own parents in whom she trusted *insisted* that she was a bad girl! Her "naughty" behavior, however, was extremely satisfying and made it possible to regain a feeling of enhancement necessary to her. She could neither accept her behavior as bad nor go on believing herself good. A multiple personality solved the problem for Helen. Helen did not have to feel guilty at what Marie did, while Marie could do things that gave the child immediate satisfaction without threatening Helen. When the child's parents were helped to remove the threats and pressure from Helen, when they had accepted their little girl's behavior, and when they had provided new ways in which Helen could gain self-esteem, Marie disappeared and has never been heard from since.

As Gardner Murphy (138 page 45) has stated the matter in his excellent review of these cases, "Most cases of multiple personality appear essentially to represent the organism's efforts to live, at different times, in terms of different systems of values." They are probably different only in degree from the common shifts of behavior of all of us at various times in our lives. Fortunately, for most of us the threats we feel in one self-definition do not greatly threaten us in another. Thus, the writer's concept of himself as a psychologist and as a father only mildly result in perceptions threatening to either. If threats were sufficiently great, however, it is conceivable that I might develop a multiple personality as one and the other at different times. It is the failure of the individual to be able to accept threatening differentiations into his concept of self which produces multiple personality. In the case cited above, Helen held a concept of herself which was *too* good. It was this very extreme position which made it impossible to accept her aggressive behavior. As a matter of fact, there is nothing very threatening in a little girl wetting her panties, quarreling with

the neighbors children, or even using "bad words." Had these not been made to appear in Helen's field so extremely threatening she might have been able to accept such concepts and might have been able to reorganize her self in more realistic and livable terms as "a little girl who is ordinarily good but has her moments." It was her parents' inability to accept Helen's behavior which made acceptance for Helen so difficult.

T. W. Mitchell (133) and Gardner Murphy (138) in separate discussions have described two general types of multiple personalities. In Type I, the two or more personalities are widely separated and the individual operating in either frame of reference has little or no apparent knowledge or memory of the activities of the other. This state of affairs appears to exist when both A aspect of self and B aspect of self are inadequate, that is, too threatened by the perception of their counterparts to be able to accept their perceptions into the organization. In this case, A will not even "know" what B has been up to. Nor will B have any apparent knowledge of A's activities. It should not be imagined, however, that this is a "real" difference in personalities for under hypnosis or some other method by which the individual can be made to feel unthreatened, both personalities can be recalled and described by the individual.

In Type II personality A is able to recall the activities of personality B, but B is apparently unaware of the activities of A. Murphy (138) summarizes Prince's "BCA" case as follows: "(BCA) after recovery wrote her autobiography as a double personality. . . . A was sober, serious, reserved, afraid of life, and of herself, 'full of metaphysical doubts and fears, full of scruples.' B was jolly and carefree, healthy and vigorous. When B suddenly disappeared, A was often shocked to find herself confronting a wineglass or a cigarette. B, however, knew all about A, pitying and despising her thoughts and attitudes, of which B always had complete and direct knowledge." We have here what Murphy has called a "restricted" and a "relaxed personality." In phenomenological terms we would call them threatened and non-threatened, respectively. The already threatened personality cannot tolerate new threatening perceptions while the less threatened personality finds it possible at least to accept new threats into figure, even

though they may be rejected and despised. Whereas in Type I we have been discussing two aspects of self each highly threatening to the other, in Type II we have a highly threatened self-definition and a less threatened one.

This restricting effect of threat is nicely illustrated in Prince's (1952) classic case of Doris Fischer. Over a period of time Doris developed four fairly distinct personalities. "Sick Doris" was a highly threatened self; a highly restricted drudge who carried out her tasks without imagination and little or no response. "Sick Doris" apparently knew nothing of the other aspects of herself in operation. Doris was a "good" girl who ordinarily did quietly what was demanded of her. Less threatened than "Sick Doris," she was, nevertheless, a threatened, restricted, introverted personality for the most part. When the threats felt by Doris were suddenly increased by the brutality of a drunken father, this personality was even more restricted. To find satisfaction of her need, to give an outlet for her aggressive feelings, and to achieve a measure of self-esteem a third and less threatened personality developed known as "Margaret." Margaret was mischievous, active, and constantly engaged in aggressive behaviors. Margaret knew about Doris, disliked her intensely and even punished Doris on occasion for playing with Margaret's possessions. Under hypnosis, a fourth personality made its appearance. This was "Sleeping Margaret." Sleeping Margaret was the most unrestricted and unthreatened of the four personalities. She knew all of the activities of her other selves and was able to converse at length, in detail, and with much objectivity about each of the other three.

Thus the multiple personality seems to be an attempt to maintain the phenomenal self through acquiring another self, adequate and able to do what is impossible or inappropriate for the original.

#### MANIC-DEPRESSIVE STATES

Bill Johnson was an extraordinarily successful business man. He was known in his community as a veritable dynamo of energy. He was athletic, hearty, and a rather dominating sort of person. He seldom listened to other people but usually had good ideas of how things could be accomplished and the energy with which to follow them

through. By virtue of his tremendous energy and frequent flashes of brilliance he rose rapidly in the X Corporation through a whirlwind development of the sales department. He finally became vice-president of the corporation. He was a promoter of no mean ability. His family was inclined to breathe a sigh of relief when he was away from home, for even in his family setting, he continued his whirlwind methods of operation. He seldom slept more than four hours a night. He looked like a very promising young man until the president of his corporation began to feel threatened by the extraordinary rise of his junior officer. The corporation president began to block Bill Johnson's ambitious efforts at every hand. Bill became wilder and wilder in his efforts to achieve his ends and finally precipitated a showdown with the board of directors. He lost, was forced to resign his job and retired to his home a very sick man. For many months he was in the depths of despair, feeling himself a complete failure. He felt inadequate to attempt the simplest thing, slept twelve or thirteen hours a day.

A few months later he was offered an important position with a government agency in a distant part of the country. Almost overnight he was a different man. He packed up his family and was off to the new location. He had hardly arrived before the same cycle began all over again. Once more he was a dynamo of energy involved in all of the affairs in his community. Again he rose rapidly to a position of considerable responsibility in the new agency until he had reached the top. It was impossible to go further in this job after three or four years without participating in politics and being elected to the next highest office. Without batting an eye he became a politician overnight and ran for election. Unfortunately, he lost by but a few votes. Immediately after election he collapsed and was hospitalized for almost a year in a deeply depressed state. Leaving the hospital he again engaged in politics and soon won for himself a minor post in the state government. Year after year saw him rise rapidly from one elective office to another until at last report he had expressed his intention to run for a national office.

The pattern presented in this case is typical of many manic-depressives. They appear to alternate between great upsurges of energy (and often of accomplishment) and extreme periods of depression. The

dynamics appear to operate somewhat as follows: The patient is possessed of a self-concept as inadequate. This concept, however, is intolerable to him and he strives in countless ways to "snow under" such threatening perceptions by a ceaseless round of activity. He attempts to prove to himself that he is better than he feels he is. Often he is successful at this sort of thing for long periods of time. So long as he remains physically healthy and has reserves of energy to call upon, he continues his wild course of behavior. He literally runs away from his problem by doing things, *anything*. When his physical resources collapse, however, he no longer feels adequate. He has not the energy with which to carry on his manic behavior. He is forced to slow down in spite of himself and is, at once, faced with the very threatening perceptions he seeks to avoid. In a very real sense his immobility robs him of his best defensive technique. He feels depressed and woefully inadequate. Such depressions are often their own cure, however, for they prevent him from being active and over a period of time his physical resources may return. Now he can feel adequate again and some little success sets him off on the business of convincing himself once more that what he believes to be true is "just not so."

In the manic phase of his behavior he gives the appearance of thinking about himself as a very capable fellow, a concept probably inferred from the tremendous lengths to which his compensations take him as seen by the outside observer. Maslow's (125, page 462) description implies this exaggerated self-concept, for example: "(The manic patient) declares that his conflicts, his anxieties, his guilt and his helplessness do not exist; he is stronger than any problem he faces, stronger than the individual who hurt him and threatened him with condemnation and abandonment. He considers himself remarkably capable instead of helpless. He is demanding instead of submissive. Instead of condemning himself, he fully approves of himself. Far from being abandoned by the world, he declares that the whole world is his."

On the other hand, the depressed phase appears to be characterized by an extremely low self-concept in which the individual may accuse himself of many horrible and heinous crimes. He feels profoundly worthless and feels extremely guilty and unworthy. He acts as though



he expected to be rejected and hurt by those who surround him and in general seems to feel sure that others' evaluations of him are completely condemnatory. A similar pattern of depression may be observed in involuntional melancholia with the oftentimes additional and complicating factor of a cessation of sexual ability, which may further contribute to feelings of inadequacy.

#### SCHIZOPHRENIC TYPES

The typical schizophrenic reaction to threat is to deny in one form or another the existence of external reality. Most of these patients appear to feel so threatened that any event, no matter how insignificant to the outside observer, is perceived by the patient as extraordinarily threatening. The slightest word or phrase, even the lift of an eyebrow in those important to them is interpreted as threat. The whole external world is just too threatening to tolerate. The schizophrenic solves this problem by retiring within himself and relegating more and more of his experience to the *not-self* aspects of his field. Although Maslow has approached this problem from a different frame of reference, his description of the schizophrenic lies very close to our own conception of these states. Maslow (125, p. 482) describes the schizophrenic in part as follows: "The evaluation of reality, as regards both social customs and perceptions, is disturbed partly because . . . the patient seems to follow a formula which implies: 'Reality does not matter; only what I desire matters.' This results in the absence of shame and the disregard of restriction common to normal human beings." From the patient's own point of view, of course, he is not denying reality. On the contrary, so far as he is concerned, he is living in the only reality; that of his phenomenal field.

*Catatonia.* Perhaps the most extreme example of this withdrawal of the individual and refusal to operate in external reality is to be observed in catatonic types of schizophrenia. In this state, separation from external reality may even involve separation from the physical body itself. It becomes possible to stick the patient with pins, to mold him almost at will without his slightest response. He behaves as though he felt "it doesn't concern me in the least," and acts like an

innocent bystander with respect to his own body conditions. The catatonic acts as though his phenomenal self were completely apart from this world. Occasionally, however, he may suddenly return to contact with objective reality with violent excitement and impulsive activity. Such returns appear to occur when the individual shifts his techniques from a withdrawal from threat to an attack upon it.<sup>5</sup>

In simple schizophrenia, the same withdrawal from external reality is evidenced as in catatonic types although the withdrawal is never so extreme. In most cases the simple schizophrenic retains some contact with the outside world although he, too, seems to adopt an attitude of "it doesn't concern me" and often becomes apathetic and dull. Many hobos present this picture. A young man known to one of the authors showed an interesting pattern of this type. All his life until he came to college he had been completely protected and petted by an extremely oversolicitous mother. He became almost entirely dependent upon her and in his college years he made a remarkable academic record. All his out of class time was spent at home with his devoted and adoring mother. In his last year of college she remarried and the young man set out after graduation for his first teaching position. Within a few days he walked out of class and never returned. He was picked up wandering the streets in a town some distance away. In the hospital he was coöperative and pleasant and when attention was paid to him he would converse intelligently on a wide variety of topics, always on a high intellectual plane. The moment the topic of conversation was steered toward himself he would skillfully avoid the reference and skip off to another topic with less personal reference. When put to work on the farm, he would go along willingly, would start hoeing at the beginning of a row, but when he reached the end would lie down. He was through for the day. No amount of urging could

<sup>5</sup> Lorenze and Levenhart, according to Maslow (125), describe the sudden return of catatonic patients to objective reality for short periods when given a mixture of 60 percent oxygen and 40 percent carbon dioxide. Although this behavior has not been adequately accounted for, it seems possible that the increased amount of oxygen and speeded up processes of bodily activity may give the patient, temporarily, a sufficiently heightened feeling of self-enhancement that he feels capable of dealing with the threat of external reality once more.

budge him to work any longer. When he was discharged to a job in a gas station he worked three hours and wandered off for several days until he was picked up again some distance away. When returned to the hospital he would sit by himself with a fixed smile for hours until someone stirred him enough to get him talking on some subject. Then he would carry on a perfectly normal conversation. He delighted in talking to groups of students touring the hospital and would discourse at length with them in their own campus language. Thus, when opportunities were presented to him for self-enhancement without overt effort he would rise to the occasion and was willing to remain in contact with external events. The moment, however, that he was thrown in any degree upon his own resources, or when it became necessary to make more than a passive reaction with his environment he would retreat into his apathetic and disinterested pattern of behavior. When he felt adequate, he acted normally. When he felt inadequate, he retreated into his protective shell. It seems likely that the loss of his mother's protection and aid left this young man so poorly equipped to deal with life that external reality became a very real and violent threat to his very existence. While not as complete a withdrawal as is true of catatonia, this case illustrates the same failure to accept threatening perceptions.

*Hebephrenia.* Hebephrenic schizophrenics are generally characterized by disorganization of thinking and often by rapidly shifting and changing behavior on the part of the patient. These patients seem characterized by self-concepts which appear to have lost the stability characteristic of the normal individual. They appear to feel threatened in many aspects of self. So much so that they cannot accept any consistent evaluation of self. They appear to be confused as to who and what they are, and feel inadequate in many ways. The definition of the phenomenal self seems almost to be shifting and changing quite out of control of the patient and his ideas and actions may shift rapidly from moment to moment. Often it is possible to observe in the so-called "word salads" of such patients a train of coherent thought which appears to rise to the surface and then disappear in a jumble of other ideas only to return again later in the passage. This sometimes

appears as though the patient's field had a momentary organization which slipped away, and returned, and slipped away again over and over.

Sometimes, too, hebephrenic patients may show severe regression to behavior characteristic of earlier age levels. Frequently, the drawings, writings, and general behavior of these people show a consistent pattern appropriate to a particular age range. A woman patient, at one time observed by one of the authors, had been a fourth-grade teacher before her disturbance became so great that it was necessary to commit her to a mental hospital. Over a period of time, this woman gradually regressed in her behavior to a level roughly equivalent to the children she formerly taught. Her behavior was remarkably like that of a fourth-grade girl in many ways. Her writing was neat, careful and studied, and her drawings were also typical of fourth-grade work. Whenever she did such work, moreover, she carefully "headed" her paper in approved conventional school manner and wrote "fourth grade" under her name. Apparently this woman had found some escape from the threat of external reality by the redefinition of her phenomenal self to a level previously satisfactory and at which she had had sufficient experience to feel fairly adequate.

Many mental patients appear to find another solution to the problem of threat in various "delusions of grandeur." Feeling inadequate to deal with the world as themselves, it is sometimes possible to achieve a feeling of adequacy and even of invincibility by adopting a ready made and proved self from history, religion, or mythology. Thus, if George Smith is not adequate to deal with life as Smith he may become George Washington instead. There is no doubt in either his mind or those about him of Washington's adequacy.

*Paranoia.* Perhaps the best illustration among the psychotic types of the threat of external reality is to be observed in the paranoid schizophrenic. Here the threat to the individual's phenomenal self may become so great that it is involved in every slightest activity in which he is concerned. He perceives threat in everything; the letters he receives are summons to court, his friends are out to get him, all the world is lying in wait for him. His feeling of being threatened colors a very large share of his perceptions. Feeling greatly threatened

his perceptions are so selected as to make it appear to the patient that he is threatened by even the smallest details of his surroundings. Alone in a threatening world the paranoid patient often spends much time in scheming to get the better of the host of enemies by whom he feels he is surrounded. He suffers delusions and hallucinations and, to all intents and purposes, he is, indeed, alone against the world.

Unlike some of the other psychotic states, the paranoid patient lives in the midst of his threats instead of withdrawing from them. He often remains more or less in touch with many aspects of external reality but builds a keen and often highly logical defense against those perceptions which appear to him most threatening. Some paranoid patients may be quite normal with respect to much of their daily living and feel threatened only when some event is perceived as relating to the areas in which they feel threatened. With respect to those areas he builds his defenses and may even on occasion attempt to destroy his fancied tormentor.



## PART II

# THE PERSONAL APPROACH APPLIED

The authors believe that for maximum advance in our science, the theory and practice of psychology must proceed hand in hand, each contributing to the thinking and progress of the other. Practice provides the test of theory. Theory provides new practice. No matter how consistent and plausible a theory may be, it is of no value if it does not contribute ultimately to the improvement of practice. Practice which does not lead to improvement of theory becomes meaningless routine. If the point of view we have presented in the preceding chapters is of value, that value should be manifest in a contribution to improved practice.

Even if this mutually stimulating relationship were not enough, the authors strongly believe in their science and in the obligation of the scientist to contribute to the culture which made him possible. If psychology has any excuse for its existence, it must lie in what contributions it can make to the improvement of man's lot on Earth. Accordingly, we have devoted the remaining chapters of this volume to a consideration of some of the practical implications of phenomenological theory to some problems of applied psychology.





## Σ CHAPTER IX Σ

### *Social Structure and Action: The Individual Approach*

PSYCHOLOGY is not the only science whose object is the prediction and control of human behavior. Each of the social sciences is equally concerned with this purpose. Every social science takes as its subject matter a limited area of human behavior and seeks to develop laws for the prediction of that behavior. History, sociology, economics and the other social disciplines are thus to a large extent dependent upon and related to psychology.

One of the reasons for the failure of the social sciences to become more exact than they are may lie in the failure of psychology to provide them with a more adequate framework and body of principles for their predictions. Any science, which bases its predictions of human behavior on an inadequate and inaccurate prediction of human motivation, will necessarily fail to predict that behavior accurately. This is true of any science that involves human behavior.<sup>1</sup>

#### SOCIAL PROBLEMS ARE PSYCHOLOGICAL IN CHARACTER

##### HISTORY: A PROBLEM OF PEOPLE

The problem of individual human behavior has been a primary source of frustration to the social scientist. In looking for the causes

<sup>1</sup> Economists, for instance, predicted in 1914 that the first world war would last only a few weeks because the governments would not be able to pay for it any longer, in 1930 that society would collapse into chaos if the banks failed, and in 1933 that the Nazi rule in Germany would be soon overthrown by a popular revolution. The German people would not tolerate Hitler long, it was said in 1933 and 1934, because he demanded that they give up butter for guns. All of these predictions were inaccurate because they were based upon an inadequate picture of human motivation, namely Adam Smith's fiction of "economic man" whose fundamental needs are for food, shelter, and clothing. Within a very few years of the last prediction the American people were also going without butter in order to have guns and, like the German people, they were quite cheerful about it.

of any social or historical event he goes back along a causal series in which almost every event has been the result of the behavior and decisions of specific individuals. Eisenhower's decision against a second postponement of D-day, the decision of the Japanese cabinet to attack Pearl Harbor, the decision of the Athenian admiral to beach his ships at Aegospotamos are spectacular examples of acts by individuals which have obviously affected history. Actually every historical or economic event is the product of the individual decisions of many individuals. Other individuals might have made different decisions with a resultant change in the course of history and of civilization.<sup>2</sup> Whenever the social scientist reaches such a point in his causal series he is within the field of psychology and his story of causal relations must thenceforth include an analysis of the causes of the individual's behavior and the reasons for his choices. If the historian or anthropologist makes an adequate analysis of the psychological factors which have brought about the behavior he is studying, his analysis may be applicable to other individuals and to other situations and so aid in the prediction or modification of future events. If, however, the analysis of the psychological factors is inaccurate or too specific, the derived principle will be inaccurate and misleading. An incorrect interpretation of the past must lead to incorrect predictions of the future. Theories of history or economics which are based upon inadequate principles of human motivation and behavior can have catastrophic results if they become part of national policy. An example is the race theory of personality and history, which not only helped plunge Germany and the greater part of the world directly into World War II, but was doubly disastrous to Germany by causing the German leaders to underrate Russia and conduct the war in such a way that they turned a potential victory into an overwhelming defeat. The misfortune of the social scientist is that, no matter how scientific he is in the collection and treatment of his data, he is forced in the

<sup>2</sup> This does not imply acceptance of the "great man" theory of history or the diffusionist theories of civilization. The decisions of the followers are as important and significant as those of the leaders in determining the course of social movements and events. Leaders are able to lead only where people are willing to follow.

end to base his explanations and predictions of events upon a psychology which is admittedly inadequate for his purposes.

#### TWO APPROACHES TO SOCIAL SCIENCE

In the absence of an adequate picture of human motivation from the psychological laboratory the social scientist has to choose between two unsatisfactory alternatives. He can base his psychological explanations and principles upon his own personal experience, which will, almost certainly, guarantee that they will be inadequate and misleading; or he can try to avoid speculation about individual behavior and choice altogether by thinking of the society, culture, or group as an individual organism and ignoring its individual members. In the latter frame of reference Rome fights Carthage, the Protestants leave France, the dominant minority oppresses the internal proletariat, the Dakota become horsemen and take to the plains.

#### INADEQUACIES OF THE SOCIAL UNIT AS THE FRAME OF REFERENCE

##### PERSONIFICATION OF GROUPS

This social-unit frame of reference has a certain plausibility and usefulness. Social groups and institutions do resemble living organisms in that they tend to maintain their organization and actively resist change and disruption from without. Since some of the ways in which the social organism reacts to threat are very similar to the techniques of threatened individuals, it is not difficult to think of states, groups, and social institutions as if they were people and to deal with them accordingly. At this level of differentiation we think of America, Britain, Russia, of labor and capital, of the American Legion and the Knights of Columbus (national), or of the American Legion Post and the Knights of Columbus lodge (local). Each social unit then tends to be thought of as motivated by needs and motives for self-preservation and aggrandizement which frequently have nothing to do with the needs and motives of its individual members. On the basis of the observer's bias and experience each group unit is endowed with

a characteristic personality, and predictions of its future behavior are based upon this personality. Unfortunately these group personalities are necessarily oversimplified. Any foreign statesman who predicts the behavior of the British government by thinking of the British Empire as either "Honest John Bull" or "Perfidious Albion" is sure to make grave and serious errors. Neither the concept of America as the unselfish Good Neighbor or as the hypocritical Yankee imperialist is adequate for predicting the behavior of the United States in world affairs.

On a consciously superficial level of speech such personification of groups is convenient and permissible but, if we are looking for a frame of reference which will allow us to predict changes in the way a group behaves the device of group personification is a complete failure. When the entire group is treated as a unit the dynamics of action within the group are ignored and obscured, and, as a consequence, there are no means of studying or predicting the changes within the group which lead to changes in its behavior. In order to appreciate the disadvantages of thinking of "the Russians," "the English," or "the Arabs" as a monolithic unit, it is only necessary to think of the difficulties which are encountered by a foreigner who thinks of "Americans" as an undifferentiated group, all the members of which have the same characteristics and motives.

If we try to avoid the problems of individual psychology by ignoring the individual and treating society as a function of groups we must pay a high penalty. It means that we must take the group as our smallest social unit. As a result its individual members must remain undifferentiated and the group considered a homogeneous unit. Therefore, conflict within the group and the causes and process of the adoption of new culture traits or the abandonment of old ones are all beyond the scope of our frame of reference. In consequence the forecasts, which are based upon such semistatic personifications as "capital," "labor," "the North," "the South," "Democrats," "Republicans," "Great Britain," etc. are apt to go badly awry, since changes within the group cannot be foreseen. This is the great nightmare of the public opinion polls. The Literary Digest poll debacle in 1936 re-

sulted from a shift of many voters from a condition where they were phenomenally Republicans or Democrats to a state where they were phenomenally "have-nots." Since these voters were not represented in the lists of telephone subscribers to whom the Digest ballots were mailed this group was not represented in the poll and the change within the Republican group was not detected.

#### THE MAINTENANCE OF THE STATUS QUO

A second serious objection to the group-unit approach to social studies is the circumstance that, since it inevitably accepts the preservation of the group organization as the basic motive of social behavior, it cannot provide any standards by which the relative goodness of a group or society can be judged. Where the only function of the social group or institution is its own survival, demonstrated ability to survive is the only means of evaluation and means for the evaluation of social progress are lacking. Unless the social sciences do have some other criterion or standard of social goodness than the length of time the society or institution has existed, it is difficult to see how they can help point the way toward a better society.

It is quite possible that a great deal of the political confusion of the present period is due to the lack of a commonly accepted standard of social goodness. It is very evident that one cause of the failure of Russian and American negotiators to reach a genuine agreement in the various peace conferences is their failure to agree on this point. It seems almost certain that all are striving for a better world, but the society which seems better to one group seems worse to the other. Each group of individuals is unquestionably limited in his picture of the good society by his own experiences in his own social order. If men of more than one culture or civilization are to work toward a common "better world" it must be one upon which they can agree.

#### SOCIAL UNIT UNRELIABLE

The basic weakness of the social unit approach lies in the fact that it necessarily treats individuals as group members only, and thus is unable to see and deal with them as individuals. As a result the derived

laws are normative and descriptive rather than precise and causal.<sup>3</sup> Even on the normative level the predictions are necessarily unreliable and illusory. Since each individual in a society is usually a member of several different groups and institutions, workers who predict upon the basis of group membership, only, often fail signally in their predictions even if they predict accurately the behavior of the groups. As a business man Mr. Jones may be impelled toward one course, as a patriot toward another, as a church member toward still another. As a taxpayer he may be for lower taxes, as a parent for better schools. From the point of view of group membership alone, therefore, his behavior is unpredictable. In the aggregate of Jones, Smiths, and Browns the behavior of the society itself is unpredictable.<sup>4</sup>

#### SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AS AN APPLICATION OF INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY

##### THE ECONOMIC APPROACH TO SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

An interesting and very important exception to the practice of starting with the group as the unit is the work of Adam Smith, who, starting with a concept of the individual as a person actively seeking to satisfy his needs, postulated that the needs were for food, clothing, and shelter, and then proceeded to derive the basic principles of classical economics by deciding how such an hypothetical "economic man" would logically behave. In this way Smith was able to derive a system of causal principles which were to a considerable degree transferable from one situation to another. Unfortunately, his fiction<sup>5</sup> that the only motives of behavior are economic does not correspond to the facts. As a consequence, the predictions of conventional economics are

<sup>3</sup> This inability to deal with individual behavior has lead many social scientists to retain instincts as explanations of behavior long after they have almost disappeared from use in psychology. Since instinctive behavior is thought of as common to all individuals of a species, the sociologist who uses people only as undifferentiated group members can find it quite adequate for his purposes.

<sup>4</sup> Another reason for failure in prediction is the circumstance that a descriptive law based upon the observation of one culture may fail completely when applied to another culture. Laws that are transferable from society to society must be based upon basic principles of human behavior, true in all cultures.

<sup>5</sup> He recognized it as a fiction and seems to have adopted it only as a means of limiting the field of phenomena with which he dealt to a controllable size.

reliable only in those circumstances where people are seeking financial profit to the exclusion of all else.<sup>6</sup> However, within the field to which he limited himself, the deductions Smith (193) made in *The Wealth of Nations* constitute an internally consistent contribution which could not have been made by the collection of empirical facts into descriptive laws, because they included a statement of causation which made it possible to predict, with fair accuracy, under what conditions they would hold good.

It is now 170 years since Adam Smith published the *Wealth of Nations*. During that period a great deal of psychological research has taken place. If the picture of human motivation and behavior which we have presented in this volume is more accurate than that used by Adam Smith, it should be possible for social scientists to derive, by methods similar to those he used, causal principles of social behavior which will be more inclusive and more accurate. As an example of what we mean we shall discuss briefly some of the implications that the phenomenological approach we have described in the earlier chapters seems to have for social behavior.

#### THE FUNCTION AND PURPOSE OF SOCIAL GROUPS

##### DIFFICULTIES IN OBSERVATION OF SOCIAL GROUPS

What, for instance, is the purpose of society and social organizations? This problem is fundamental to all social sciences because an evaluation of any institution or culture can only be made in terms of its purpose. A better society can be recognized only if the purposes of society are known. Actually each individual's concept of social purpose is so fundamental a part of his concept of reality (phenomenal field) that few people are willing to admit that the purpose of society is open to question. The naïve individual, indoctrinated in the basic truth and correctness of his own culture, naturally assumes that the basic purpose of any society is to evolve into an ideal society, which always turns out to be a modification of his own. Since his culture is the true one, it stands as the pattern and goal of all others. The evalua-

<sup>6</sup> Note the frustration of conventional economists in dealing with labor-management problems when the real goals are mastery or power rather than food, shelter, or clothing.

tions of any society made by the member of Western civilization, by the citizen of the Soviet Union, by the Hindu, by the Moslem, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Eskimo, the Bantu are thus inevitably different and in conflict.<sup>7</sup> A comparative study of societies and social institutions is manifestly impossible under such conditions, since it can only lead to the cataloguing of societies and institutions in hierarchical order according to their degree of resemblance to the social institutions of which the cataloguer approves.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, an effort to give up the values peculiar to the investigator's culture and consider social groups and institutions from a more detached point of view may very easily result in a comparative study of institutions in which their values and purposes are completely ignored, and the institutions are treated as independent entities which have no relation to human life or happiness. The phenomenological approach offers a way out of this impasse in the following manner.

#### THE SUCCESSFUL SOCIETY

The individual human being, as we have described him, is exclusively concerned with the preservation and enhancement of his phenomenal self. It therefore follows that the purpose of any society, from the point of view of the individual member, is the satisfaction of his need for self-enhancement.<sup>9</sup> It seems reasonable to assume,

<sup>7</sup> It is no wonder that the European and American delegates to the United Nations Council and Assembly line up along the dividing line between Western civilization and Eastern Orthodox civilization. Each side feels that the other is deliberately dishonest because of the different ways in which they evaluate the same institution and event. It is possible that much of the suspicion and tension could be relieved, if the two groups could realize that they represent not one civilization but two. In that case each could think of the other as mistaken rather than dishonest and the differences in interpretation would be more readily expected and accepted.

<sup>8</sup> The same result occurs when intelligence tests devised for one nationality are administered to children whose parents are of other nationalities. When American tests are given in this way the average IQ of the children of foreign-born parents of any nationality is, with one or two exceptions, a function of the degree of similarity between the culture of the parental country and of the United States. On American tests the order of success among the children of the foreign born is: first, the British Isles and northwest Europe; second, central Europe; third, southern and eastern Europe; fourth, the Near East (62, 72).

<sup>9</sup> It will be recalled from our previous discussion that individuals may seek self-enhancement through working for a group with whom they are identified. It is apparent, however, that this is still a function of self-enhancement.



therefore, that the attitude of any individual toward any social group or institution is determined by its effectiveness in assisting him to preserve and maintain his phenomenal self. Societies, if this is correct, are successful in proportion as they satisfy the need of their members.

When a society no longer satisfies this need its members die or leave and it disappears.<sup>10</sup> In the same way a society or social group gains adherents to the extent that it facilitates the satisfaction of their need.

#### THE RELATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE SOCIAL GROUP

If the foregoing assumptions are correct the following normative principles appear to follow:

1. *Individuals tend to seek self-enhancement through identifying themselves with and winning the approval of groups or individuals they believe to be important.*<sup>11</sup>

This principle, which forms the chief stock in trade of the advertising industry, is one of our most effective means of social control. If it is to be used effectively, it must be recognized that it is a phenomenological principle and not an objective one and that its effectiveness depends upon the individual customer's system of values. Millions of children, but almost no adults, have eaten spinach to be like Popeye. Popeye can be a hero to a child but he is only an amusing character to most adults.

While the above principle is widely accepted and used in efforts to control behavior, its converse is less well recognized.

2. *People tend to withdraw from groups whose approval they are unable to win and from groups which no longer satisfy their need.*

Toynbee (209) points out that new civilizations arise when the previous civilization is abandoned by its proletariat. The origin of

<sup>10</sup> In less inclusive social groups, the group may persist by continuously attracting new members as the old ones leave. This is possible in groups where membership confers increased prestige for younger age levels but not for older age levels or where the benefits in some way are largely restricted to new members. The Boy Scouts, age-grade societies, and many luncheon clubs and lodges are examples.

<sup>11</sup> For extreme examples of the effort to identify with importance and power see Bettelheim's (22) account of the way in which Dachau inmates attempted to identify themselves in dress and behavior with the Gestapo guards and, when possible, with the "master race."

western civilization, for instance, came in the adoption of Christianity by the oppressed proletariat of the Roman world. The principle functions as accurately, however, on the levels of the family, the social club, or the casual conversational group.

We now have two principles which describe the conditions under which individuals seek or reject group membership. The next principles describe the attitudes of an individual who has identified himself with a group.

3. *Identification of an individual with a group leads him to adopt and defend the standards and behavior of the group.*

To think well of himself it is necessary for him to think well of his group, thus introducing distortion into the individual's phenomenal field. An attack upon the group is an attack upon himself,<sup>12</sup> aggrandizement for the group is aggrandizement for himself.

4. *Having adopted the standards of one group, the individual has adopted a set of standards by which he evaluates the behavior of other people and the importance of other groups.*

Since each individual accepts the reality of his own phenomenal field, the customs and attitudes of his own group are judged as objectively superior and other people and other groups are judged by these standards. Americans, for instance, commonly place a high value upon houses with modern plumbing. As a result, many American soldiers consider that the Germans are superior to the French, who are less able to afford such luxuries. The boy who has identified himself with the predelinquent gang has a different system of prestige values from the boy who has identified himself with the Boy Scouts or who thinks of himself as a responsible citizen. They admire not only different institutions but different individuals and types of success. As a consequence they are not responsive to the same social controls. Each must think well of his group.

According to the second of our principles the attitude of an indi-

<sup>12</sup> The strength of reaction to the attack is a function of the degree of threat. Criticism of the group by a fellow member stirs much less violent response than attack of the same sort by an outsider, who is presumed to be hostile to the whole group. A teacher, for instance, who has himself criticized certain features of the educational system, may resent such criticism from outsiders because he feels that he is part of the system. Criticism by foreigners is universally resented.

vidual toward a group is, to a great extent, determined by the attitude of the group toward him. The group, however, is made up of individuals and the attitudes of those individuals toward any aspirant toward group membership is determined by the effect his membership would have on their own self-concepts.

5. *Members of a group accept and approve those individuals who seem to them to be important.*

That is, an individual who is able to behave in ways admired by the members of the group will be sought as an associate providing his acceptance will enhance the self-concepts of the members. Individuals who behave in ways condemned by the group are avoided and rejected. Social classes are distinguished primarily by the behavior of their members. Individuals who are able to behave in conformity with the standards of the group are accepted and other individuals, considered uncouth, are rejected. Contrary to popular opinion, money does not automatically give advancement to a higher social class. It merely makes it possible with training to behave in the ways that are admired by such a class. In Yankee City, for instance, (211) the upper-uppers were almost exclusively members of families which had had two or three generations to perfect and master the class behavior. The wealthiest man in town was upper-middle class because he did not wish to change his behavior and insisted that his children conform to middle class standards as well.

It is readily apparent that these principles confer a continuity, consistency, and conservatism upon the behavior of groups which agrees with the empirical observations; but the dynamics of this consistent behavior are found in the efforts of the individual members to maintain and enhance their own phenomenal selves. The effective factors in determining the individual's behavior toward society are, as for all behavior, his need, his phenomenal field at the moment of action, and the potentialities for differentiation that exist in that field.

#### ADVANTAGES OF THE INDIVIDUAL APPROACH

By taking the individual rather than the group as the behaving unit we are able to understand and predict several features of group behavior which are otherwise inexplicable. For example, if the social

group is conceived as a unit, seeking its own security and expansion, there should be no discrimination against any person who seeks membership. On the other hand, if we think of the individual member as the unit, it is very clear that he will welcome only those associates who will assist him in the satisfaction of his need and the attainment of his goals, and the selective character of group membership not only becomes understandable but, given enough information about the individual members, is predictable.

In the same way, a theory of group behavior which treats the groups as if they were made up of undifferentiated individuals can have no theory of the origin and emergence of new groups except by the amalgamation of others. The individual approach, however, infers that new groups and institutions are bound to arise wherever numbers of people have difficulty in satisfying their need within the existing framework of society.<sup>13</sup> It thus arrives logically at Toynbee's normative principle that new groups and institutions arise most frequently among the urban proletariat.<sup>14</sup>

#### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CULTURE CHANGE

The same principles that govern the relation of the individual to the groups and institutions he encounters also govern the transfer

<sup>13</sup> Once a distinctive group attitude begins to develop it may go to a point (Principles 1, 2, 3, 4) where the members are almost completely out of touch with other individuals and the rest of society. Since the items and characters that rise into figure in the phenomenal field derive their meaning from their relationship to other parts of the field, the acceptance by an individual of the standards of a group imposes a characteristic distortion upon his field. This distorted concept of reality, reinforced by communication with other members of the group who share the same distortion, is accepted as reality and forms the basis for further distortion until members of the group are cut off from effective communication with other individuals. At the time of writing (August 1946), this seems to be happening on a large scale in many parts of the world: between English and Zionists, between Hindus and Moslems in India, and between Russians and inhabitants of the English-speaking nations. Since large numbers of Americans have secondary identifications with either England or Judaism, there is grave danger that the growing differentiation between English and Jewish groups in Europe and Palestine may result in an increased difference between their associated groups in America.

<sup>14</sup> From our point of view the slum gang develops as a result of the inability of its members to satisfy their needs within the existing framework of the society. We believe this is the opinion generally held by sociologists and psychologists.

and adoption of culture elements and techniques. Linton (118) has pointed out that the factors most important in determining the introduction of cultural novelties are: (1) the prestige of the individual under whose auspices the novelty is introduced, (2) the prestige of the inventor or donor society, and (3) the effectiveness of the trait or techniques in the local environment. In other words, an individual in one culture adopts those aspects of another culture which make possible the enhancement of his phenomenal self. These are selected in terms of his existing field. Alcohol, for instance, was a boon from heaven in the eyes of the Plains Indians, who lived in a field where men became great and found power in dreams and delirium. The Hopi, on the other hand, living in a field of complete but fragile order and regularity, where a single mistake in the ritual dance might shatter the universe, saw alcohol as a tremendous menace and rejected it. It is a well established principle of anthropology that cultural elements which fit the pattern of the recipient culture are transmitted without obstacle, and that elements that do not fit the pattern are rejected or accepted only after modification and distortion. For instance, firearms are immediately transmitted to hunting societies which have a surplus for barter, printing presses are rejected, and alarm clocks are accepted only as ornaments. This is a normative application of the psychological principle we have cited earlier, that new entities or characters are selected in accordance with the individual's need and are modified or distorted by their relation to other parts of his field. The anthropological principle could have been derived from the psychological principle had not the anthropologists discovered it first.

#### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INTER-GROUP RELATIONS

Since each individual customarily regards his own view of the world as true, just, and real, he is apt to regard the behavior of other people as more or less mistaken and in error. This is especially true if he is observing people of a markedly different culture, since by their failure to conform to his standards they inevitably stamp themselves as ignorant or evil or both. Contacts between different cultural groups are almost always uncomfortable because of the difficulties of com-

municating<sup>15</sup> which tend to make individuals on both sides feel frustrated, inadequate, and often, suspicious unless one group is so clearly superior in power that the question of comparative force is not even considered.<sup>16</sup> It can be taken as a basic principle that no minority group is the object of attack until it becomes large enough for the majority group to feel threatened.<sup>17</sup> It is also basic that under threat the members of each group tend to respond by an accentuation and idealization of the group characteristics. It is only by placing emphasis on their differences from the other group that they can feel superior to them.<sup>18</sup> The claim to be a master race is the result of a feeling of encirclement and threat from other groups and is an effort to enhance the threatened phenomenal selves of the group members. Propaganda stressing "encirclement" is a common technique of governments wishing to create a greater feeling of unity in their own group. Both Hitler and the Russian communist leadership have used it with conspicuous success, and it is not unknown in America. It is most eagerly accepted by those members of the group who are most in need of self-enhancement. As a general thing, group conflict is at its maximum between the lower levels of the conflicting groups, especially if these levels are the victims of aggression and domination within their own groups.

#### THE RESOLUTION OF GROUP CONFLICT

Conflict between groups must, in the long run, end in the assimilation of the two groups, with each giving up its claim to exclusive

<sup>15</sup> We do not mean merely the difference in language. We are referring also to the difference in meaning of objects and activities which are an invariable aspect of cultural difference and make the interpretation of behavior by a person of another culture difficult and dangerous.

<sup>16</sup> Communities and schools which pride themselves on absence of intolerance and prejudice almost always prove to have only a few members of the minority group in residence. Under such circumstances the minority members may have added prestige as exotic individuals.

<sup>17</sup> It is not of course necessary that the minority should be the actual source of the threat; but it is necessary that the minority group be large enough or powerful enough for the members of the majority to believe that it is a threat, so that it can become a reasonably convincing scapegoat. Furthermore, if the minority group is small its members are more easily differentiated from one another and tend, therefore, to be treated as individuals rather than as group members.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, the great upsurge of Zionism after the horrors of Nazi atrocities and the glorification of color in the Negro press.

right and superiority and modifying its institutions. For example, with the amalgamation of the Irish culture into the old American culture, St. Patrick's Day and the idealization of Ireland have become American traditions. As soon as the Irish were accorded a respected status amalgamation could take place without loss of self-esteem on either side. In such an amalgamation the smaller group will ordinarily move farther and make more modifications of culture than the larger group.<sup>19</sup>

The only other way in which group conflict can end is by the destruction or reduction to impotence of one group culture by the other. This is what wars have attempted since time immemorial. It is what Hitler attempted with the Jewish minorities and is basic to the concept of "divide and conquer."

This is a hard alternative to contemplate and it may appear to some that there might be an intermediate stage of continued separation with avoidance of conflict through mutual respect and confidence. This is a desirable goal and one we should strive to achieve. Such a condition can be only temporary, however, since mutual respect encourages and makes possible the movement of individuals from one group to the other and thus results in eventual assimilation of the two groups. For this reason there is a tendency for the cultural leaders of a minority group, who have a vested interest in the preservation of its institutions, to demand tolerance and good will from the members of the majority group in ways that subtly lead to intolerance and ill will by their own group toward the majority. By posing as the defenders of their people against an aggressive majority they solidify their own positions and increase the unity and resistance to assimila-

<sup>19</sup> The comparative degree of shift may be roughly considered as inversely proportional to the population ratio of the two groups. If group A makes up one-fifth of the population and group B four-fifths, in a condition of non-selective movement and intercourse members of group A will have to adjust to members of group B four times as often as individual members of group B will meet and adjust to members of group A. If, as actually happens, the personal relations are selective, the process is slowed but the ultimate result is not affected unless contact between the groups is cut off altogether. This principle is only normative like the others we are deriving in this chapter. What will actually happen always depends upon the phenomenal fields of the particular individuals involved. For instance, if the minority group has superior power and prestige in the eyes of a substantial number of the majority, the majority culture will shift farther because their members will move more than halfway in their contacts with minority members.

tion of their own group. The suspicions they thus foster among their followers defeat their ostensible purpose by threatening the majority group and bringing about an intensification of hostility.

#### MEANS OF REDUCING GROUP CONFLICT

Fortunately, while group conflict and suspicion are inevitable in some degree as long as the groups exist, there do appear to be means by which the intensity of the conflict may be greatly reduced and eventual assimilation speeded. Conflict between groups is, in some degree, the result of aggressive and dominating behavior within one or both of the groups, since there is a strong tendency for individuals who are unable to secure adequate satisfaction of need in their own society to seek such satisfaction by dominating and aggressive behavior against members of weaker groups. It is quite possible that the most effective way of reducing group conflict would be the reduction of domination and aggression within the groups themselves.

Since conflict between groups is always carried on by individuals who think of themselves and their antagonists as group members rather than as individuals,<sup>20</sup> group conflict can be prevented by increasing the opportunities for the members of the two groups to differentiate one another as individuals. One way to do this, as we have already suggested, is by encouraging members of the minority to scatter themselves as widely as possible among the members of the majority. This is, of course, impractical where group feelings are already strong since it is a step toward abandonment of the minority group institutions and cannot, therefore, be taken under threat.

Another way of fostering the differentiation of members of the conflicting groups as individuals is by increasing the possibilities for

<sup>20</sup> A major function of military training and indoctrination is to induce the individual to regard himself as a soldier rather than as a civilian. Since a person's behavior is determined by his phenomenal field it is impossible to get him to act as a soldier until he conceives of himself as one. Furthermore, if he thinks of himself as a soldier, acts which are taboo to him as an individual are not only permissible but, in many cases, mandatory. Europeans who have seen Americans only as soldiers may be expected to have a very erroneous picture of Americans if, by Americans, we mean individual civilians. In the same way, a person who thinks of himself as a white in contact with a Negro will behave very differently than if he thinks of himself as John Smith in contact with John Brown.



communication between them. Communication is possible only when there is an overlapping of cultural fields so that there is a common area of meanings. From this point of view the practice by which books and motion pictures about foreign countries emphasize the strange and exotic features can be expected to achieve little or nothing toward promoting tolerance and good will. The "Man Bites Dog" concept of "news" frequently contributes to just this end. The emphasis of news gathering agencies upon the bizarre and the different may even contribute to the intensification of group conflict.

On the other hand a motion picture or story which shows the people at their daily work and children at their games promotes fellow-feeling, if the work and games are those familiar to the audience. An interesting and effective means of promoting fellow-feeling among members of different groups is that used by Rachel Davis-DuBois (57). Instead of talking about the problems on which they suspect differences they are asked to talk about their childhood memories—"talk about bread, for example." As soon as members of both groups have told about coming home to eat fresh, hot, crusty bread that their mothers had baked they feel as if they have spent their childhood together and are members of a common group. Common experiences make possible a common feeling and citizens of the same state, who would not stop to speak if they met at home, have a feeling of close kinship when they meet in a foreign land. A common language is a great advantage, especially if it is spoken with a common accent.

Another way of reducing conflict between groups is to provide them with a common objective or enemy. The need for action in the common cause makes all individuals in the previously conflicting groups important to one another and identification with one another comes as a result of their identification with the common cause. This technique of providing a common enemy is, as we have said before, often used more or less consciously by political groups and nations as a means of reducing tensions in their own ranks. Threat prevents disintegration of the group relationship since all threatened individuals seek shelter and support from one another.

A more productive method of reducing group conflict lies in the development within a society of individuals who feel adequate to deal

with their perceptions. We are afraid of that which we do not feel capable of handling. What we feel adequate to deal with does not threaten us. Thus, the society which can produce adequate phenomenal selves in its members can tolerate or accept difference in others, and group conflict will thereby be reduced or disappear. A society composed of non-threatened, non-threatening personalities will not be in conflict. We shall want to see later in this chapter how the development of adequacy in the phenomenal selves of the members of a society can be brought about.<sup>21</sup>

#### PROBLEMS OF GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL ASSIMILATION

Groups do not associate with one another as groups. The process of assimilation of groups really consists of the assimilation of separate individuals. An individual seeks admission to a new group, as we have said, if he respects and admires the members so that he would secure self-enhancement through identifying himself with them or if membership in the group will otherwise aid him in the satisfaction of his need. Compare the complete and rapid assimilation of German immigrants in the United States, where the standard of living is higher than in Germany, with the unassimilability of Germans, even after hundreds of years, in eastern Europe, where the standard of living of the local culture is lower than that of the German culture. What the individual thinks of himself is the important factor in determining his search for assimilation and membership. Any person will seek membership in the new group more actively if he feels that he is acceptable to the members; and he is more apt to withdraw from his original group if he is threatened or humiliated within that group.

In the same way, an individual seeking admission to a group is assessed and accepted or rejected, not by an impersonal group but by individual members, each of whom considers the candidate in the light of his own need. If the membership of the candidate in the group will enhance the phenomenal selves of the individuals, he will be accepted. As a general thing, anyone advancing from an "inferior" to a "superior" group is handicapped by his previous membership in the

<sup>21</sup> For a more complete description of the adequate phenomenal self see Chapter VII.

"inferior" group<sup>22</sup> so that he must have unusual qualities and abilities to gain acceptance. If he shows obvious physical or behavioral characteristics of the "inferior" group he must counterbalance them with tremendous prestige in the eyes of the new group. He will be aided further by a personality that does not actively dominate or threaten the self-esteem of the members of the group he seeks to join. It will not be a handicap and may even be an advantage if he threatens outsiders, provided, he does it in a socially acceptable way. Artists, writers, athletes and members of some of the professions, if successful, have unusual opportunities for social mobility because they are admired by so many people. The American public schools and, in particular, the high school athletic teams, by providing able individuals with opportunities for winning prestige are an important factor in social mobility and group assimilation.<sup>23</sup> It goes without saying that any society must provide opportunities for mobility if the most able individuals are to reach the positions where they will be of most benefit, and the preparation for mobility might well be given greater emphasis in all areas of education.

### WHAT IS A GOOD SOCIETY?

#### LACK OF AGREEMENT IN DEFINITION

As we have said above, one of the principle barriers to international coöperation, among peoples, all of whom sincerely desire a better world and a better society, is the lack of agreement among the various groups as to what constitutes a good society. The representatives of each culture, considering their own version of society as fundamentally right and true, believe that the better society can only arise from a further development and modification of their own. This is true whether they be Iranian or Hindu, Russian or American, Berber or Eskimo. To the true representative of each, any other society is manifestly inferior to his own. If we did not have the human capacity

<sup>22</sup> Could it be that the demonstrated tendency for Americans to marry outside the immediate neighborhood is due to the fact that individuals of the same age group in the neighborhood are remembered as children and consequently retain some aspects of inferiority?

<sup>23</sup> They also increase the possibilities for communication by providing a common area of experience for many individuals.

for self-deception and wishful thinking, it would be unbelievable that anyone should expect harmony and coöperation in world planning among individuals or nations which have as diverse pictures of the better world as do the various cultural blocs and groups among the United Nations. Such a conflict of ideals and values is almost certain to result in the political conflict already apparent among the United Nations, in which each bloc is chiefly interested in defending the integrity of its own society against the social reforms of the other blocs. Under such circumstances international conferences are chiefly concerned with obstruction rather than coöperation and end either without agreement or in a mutually distasteful acceptance of the status quo.<sup>24</sup>

Real coöperation for world betterment can arise only out of common goals. This is to say, there must be mutual agreement on the ends which are to be attained. All groups sincerely desire a better society. But there can be genuine coöperation only among individuals who are able to look beyond the particular devices and techniques used in their own societies and focus their attention on the ends themselves.

#### THE GOOD SOCIETY SATISFIES NEED

What are these ends? We have already given two answers. The purpose of society and of social institutions, we have said, is the satisfaction of human need. The basic human need is the preservation and enhancement of the phenomenal self. If these two assumptions are correct, we have here a culture-free criterion by which the comparative goodness of societies can be determined. A society is good to the degree that it enables its members and neighbors to live with health, security, self-respect and dignity. It is good in the degree to which it aids its members to the development of phenomenal selves adequate to deal with the world that surrounds them. A society is bad to the extent that it fails to provide these things for its members or removes them from its neighbors. The inadequate phenomenal self will feel threatened and will threaten others in turn.

<sup>24</sup> During these postwar years the apparent conflict is between the Western and Eastern European cultures because these are the only two cultures which, at the present time, are strong enough to be a threat to one another on a world scale.

The society must be judged primarily by the degree to which it satisfies the need of its least important members, since the non-satisfied members of any society are, like cancer cells in the body, a source of danger to their fellow members and to the social organization itself. For this reason one criterion of a good society is the extent to which it makes less necessary the use of techniques for satisfying need like domination and aggression which give satisfaction to one member only by depriving others. These are techniques of the inadequate phenomenal self. Socially, such techniques may be thought of as attempts to lift the society by its bootstraps; as the aggressor enhances his phenomenal self and goes up the victim goes down. When the domination is institutionalized on a grand scale with a noticeable ruling class and hierarchy of domination the eventual result must be a revolt of the internal proletariat or external aggression so that they can have someone to dominate.<sup>25</sup>

A society which fails to satisfy the needs of its members is therefore not only not good for its members; it is a source of danger to its neighbors.

Having ruled out aggression and domination as techniques of a "good" society we are now confronted with the question of how social control can be exercised without them? How would it, for instance, prevent delinquency?

It would do this in three ways. First, such a society would enable more individuals to maintain self-esteem and would thus reduce the need for delinquency. Second, such a society, once established, would regard the dominating individual as a person to be aided to achieve need satisfaction by more effective techniques of self-enhancement. Thirdly, the "good" society would not only protect its members from injury, insult, and humiliation; it would also provide each member with positive opportunities for the satisfaction of his need. It would assist each individual to the development of an adequate phenomenal

<sup>25</sup> At the risk of beating a dead horse we should like to point out that the "good" German and "bad" German are often the same individual, submissive and coöperative toward superiors, dominating and aggressive toward inferiors. Raised in a hierarchy of domination, which includes the family organization, each German has learned to submit to and agree with superiors and then restore his self-esteem by aggressive acts against inferiors.

self. To accomplish this, a high standard of physical health is essential but not sufficient. The most essential thing is that each individual must have an opportunity to work, to feel personally successful and to sacrifice for some cause which to him is important. Each person must have opportunity to feel that his life has meaning, importance, and purpose.

It is not our function to prophesy what conditions might enable each human being to have this feeling of dignity and importance that would typify the members of the "good" society. Such a self-appreciation might be advanced by a revision of the educational system to bring about a clearer understanding of the way in which each individual, in a highly specialized society, is important to all other persons. It might result from a new challenge from nature in the form of soil depletion or another ice age. It might arise in any of a great variety of ways still more exciting. It might even come out of a revitalized and evangelical religion.

#### THE GOOD SOCIETY MUST BE DYNAMIC

The ideal society cannot be described in terms of its institutions. All planners of Utopia, except More himself, have made a fundamental mistake in conceiving of a society which reaches an ideal state and remains unchanged thereafter. No static unchanging Utopia can be the psychologically satisfying "good" society which we are seeking. The culture of such a society must be dynamic and flexible rather than static, because the individual's need for the preservation and enhancement of his phenomenal self can never be completely satisfied. No matter how successfully he solves his problems and builds up his feeling of strength and security he cannot long forget that defeat and death lie in wait for him in the future. As a consequence no successes and no recognition can be enough to give him the permanent feeling of adequacy and self-assurance that he seeks. Further achievement and growth are always necessary. As a result no society which attempts to remain static can adequately satisfy the needs of its members. A "good" society must provide its members with opportunities for self-enhancement by pioneering in new fields and at ever more difficult problems. This will necessarily result in a dynamic society

continually pushing on to new areas of achievement and growth.

In brief, the essential characteristics of a good society may be summarized as follows:

1. It should be sufficiently productive to maintain the health and physical well-being of its members and the necessary equipment and supplies to carry on its institutions.
2. It should institutionalize and encourage techniques of production and coöperation among its members. Techniques of domination and aggression should be discouraged and avoided.
3. It should contribute to the development of an adequate phenomenal self in each of its members. This it can do by aiding each to the most effective satisfaction of need. In order to make possible the satisfaction of human need in a wide variety of conditions over a long period of time its institutions and customs should have a high degree of flexibility. They should be recognized as means toward an end, not ends in themselves.

#### MORE THAN ONE GOOD SOCIETY

What can be done to make society better? First, it will be necessary to recognize that there can be more than one "good" society. Any society which satisfies the above criteria is a good society and it would be impossible to say that any society now existing could not develop into a good society. Very definitely, attacks upon other societies can not make them into good societies. People are not free to change under threat and a group under attack simply accentuates its distinctive characteristics. A good society can only grow where there is a minimum of conflict between societies, so that the people of each feel free to move and change.

At the present time we are in a crisis in which the civilized societies of the world might very easily go into a spiral of regression, which would make them of such little value to their members that their abandonment and collapse might follow. Threat from outside forces a mobilization of resources which interferes with the normal functioning and development of a society. The internal tensions thus created constitute a counter-threat which in turn create tensions in the society of the potential enemy. This in turn increases the threat and leads to

increased tension and coercion within the first society. Unless this regressus of threat and counter-threat can be broken the process seems certain to mount in intensity until the statesmen of one group decide that war is preferable to the further deterioration and threatened collapse of their society.<sup>26</sup> The problem of breaking this regressus is so important that it calls for the mobilization of social scientists and psychologists on at least as large a scale as the mobilization of physical scientists for the development of the atom bomb. It would differ from that project in that it might not be too late to use the social scientists of all the states concerned.

#### THE APPROACH TO A GOOD SOCIETY

If a solution for this problem is found it will be in terms of the particular personalities involved. Normative principles, of the type we have developed in this chapter, can only suggest the general manner of attack.

We can, however, make the following general suggestions:

1. If representatives of different cultures are to work together effectively they must have a common frame of reference, a common goal, a common criterion of a good society. Attempts to evaluate progress by the standards of any one culture are bound to result in disagreement and suspicion.
2. Some way must be found to remove the members of the various societies and cultures of the world from fear and threat.
3. Since our own society is at the present time the most powerful we must recognize that in the minds of many it represents a source of threat. We must remove this fear. This means that the only society we can directly change is our own.<sup>27</sup> We must not meddle with the culture of others. Furthermore, one way of removing threat from

<sup>26</sup> Statesmen who hope for internal collapse of the rival state without war are bound to be disappointed. War, as we have implied earlier, is a means of postponing social change and revolution, at least temporarily. Therefore the rival statesmen choose war.

<sup>27</sup> This presents a problem the authors are not prepared to solve since its solution depends upon what Europeans think of America and American culture. It "we" include all Western civilization our course of action will be quite different than if "we" includes only the English speaking peoples or the Americans alone.



others is to reduce the tension in our own society by changing it for the better. In this respect we should not hope for too much immediately. There are three ways of changing a culture. One way is to abandon it en-masse, to give it up. Since we have mastered no alternative culture such a course would cause the death of most of the members of our society as its institutions for the production and distribution of goods ceased to operate. Another way to change a society is by revolution. Since people have learned to manipulate only the culture in which they have been living, revolution results in surprisingly small changes in the culture pattern itself, although it often results in a more efficient and intelligent government. It is rarely worth the price, however, due to the high death rate during the initial stages of the revolution, when sweeping changes in the society are being attempted and a great deal of disturbance and dislocation results.<sup>28</sup> The only alternative seems to be a continuation of the slow process of change without pressure or violence. One thing needed to quicken the process is a common goal. If the goal is one that can be shared and accepted by the people of many different cultures the progress toward a better society or better societies might be markedly accelerated.

In the foregoing discussion we have tried to set up such a common goal as a measuring stick for the progress and effectiveness of all societies. If we are right in our assumption that the function of societies is the satisfaction of human need it is the responsibility of psychology to furnish such a measuring stick. The one we have proposed may not be as universal as we think. Other psychologists before us have erred by ascribing universal validity to a motive that was universal only in the particular group to which they themselves belonged. We have tried to guard against this error,<sup>29</sup> but if we have made such a mistake the search for a more fundamental and inclusive need should begin at once.

<sup>28</sup> Note that following an initial period of westernization and democracy (and famine) the USSR has tended more and more to revert to the governmental and productive systems of Czarist Russia, substituting the OGPU for the Cheka, Stalin for the Czar, and the collective for the landed estate. It was impossible for the new rulers of Russia to make a fundamental change in the culture because it was the only culture that they and their people had learned.

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter IV, pages 55-61.

## ≋ CHAPTER X ≋

### *The Goals of Education*<sup>1</sup>

#### THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY TO EDUCATION

THE techniques of coöperation and production by which the members of any society seek to survive and satisfy their need are not instinctive. They must be learned. It is necessary for each generation to teach its children how to take their places in their particular society and do their share of its work. The interruption, for one generation, of this process of education would bring about the death of the society and the death, through starvation, violence, or disease, of most of its members. The education of its people is therefore a primary function of every society, of vital concern to every person.

It seems obvious that a knowledge of psychology should be of great assistance to the teachers upon whom the responsibility for educating the new members of our society rests. Their need for an understanding of human nature and behavior is so clear that, in most American states, teachers in training are required to spend more hours in the study of psychology than are the candidates for any other profession, not excluding medicine.

The contributions of psychology to education have not, however, been as great as an intelligent citizen who has never studied either subject might expect. If he knew only that psychology is the science of human behavior, he might very well expect it to provide teachers with a framework of basic principles from which all their educational practice would be derived. If education is to become a truly profes-

<sup>1</sup> As this book goes to press, the authors' attention has been called to Earl Kelley's book *Education for What Is Real*, Harper, 1948. Basing his approach to educational problems upon the Hanover Institute studies in perception, he has arrived at conclusions with respect to education strikingly similar to the position we have taken in this and the following chapter. The interested reader will find Dr. Kelley's book an interesting and thought-provoking work.

sional field, in the sense that educators become able to deal with individual cases and new problems in more than routine fashion such a use of psychological theory is essential. The teacher, the parents, and the public can assess the validity of any educational goal or practice only in terms of their personal views of what people are like and how they behave. At the present time, however, the basic views of these people have been little affected by current psychological theory or research. The trouble seems to be that in recent years the psychologists have been spending their time looking for facts while the teachers have been badly in need of theories. It seems self-evident that it is the task of psychology to provide more accurate information to educators but merely providing information is not enough. Without a background of theory to give it meaning and point up its implications no item of information is going to seem very important or have much influence upon educational philosophy and practice.<sup>2</sup> For instance, the contributions of workers like Knight Dunlap, Moreno, and Lewin and his co-workers have had much less effect upon school practice than they should because the basic interpretive theory which would make them understandable and useful to all teachers has not, as yet, been developed. Until psychologists have developed a frame of reference which brings their unwieldy body of information into unity and consistency, psychology can hardly function as a guide to teachers. Until we are able to furnish educators with a theoretical frame of reference which can reduce their own experiences with people to order, no general agreement on educational practices can be expected, even among psychologists.

Our purpose in undertaking the task of theory construction which has been described in the earlier chapters of this book was to further the development of such a frame of reference. Whether the frame of reference we have proposed will prove adequate for this major task of unification remains to be seen. In any event it should, if it has any validity at all, perform another function as well. In any field a new point of view is bound to provide a new perspective and new methods

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the report of Horrocks (91) that knowledge of facts and principles of adolescent behavior have very little to do with ability to use those facts, even in written examinations.

of approach which often make possible the solution of old problems and the discovery of new ones. The phenomenological point of view is not new; but we believe that in defining it more explicitly than previous writers we may heighten its capacity to provide a meaningful frame of reference for the problems of education.

#### EDUCATION AS CHANGE IN THE PHENOMENAL FIELD

Advocates of all systems and goals in education agree on one thing: that education, to be effective, must result in a change in the behavior of the person educated. If no change results, the attempts at education have been unsuccessful. It is the primary thesis of this book that behavior is completely determined by the phenomenal field at the moment of action. From this point of view, then, the process of education is fundamentally a process of change in the phenomenal field. Behavior is determined by the field, and the way to change behavior is to change the field.

In order to discuss the educational implications of this statement, as we see them, it will be necessary to discuss various aspects of the field and their relation to behavior. Our division of the field for purposes of discussion should not be interpreted to mean that these aspects are independent of one another or that they have independent and separate effects upon your behavior. As we have suggested in an earlier chapter, the behavior of an organism is never a chance or disconnected series of responses to separate and independent parts of the field. An intact organism does not rush around madly "like a chicken with its head cut off." Nor does it respond to isolated features of the field with the reflex behavior of a decerebrate dog. When the organism is intact the behavior is always organized; it is a total response to a total organized field, to the phenomenal field of the behaving organism. This presents organismic psychologists with a problem because it is difficult to talk specifically about a total field. So, to make our discussion specific and to relate it to the current points of view and problems of education, we shall have to discuss separately two different aspects of the phenomenal field. These aspects are (1) the non-self part of the field, which the individual thinks of as his environment; and (2) the phenomenal self.

## THE PHENOMENAL ENVIRONMENT

It is to the non-self aspects of the field, his phenomenal environment, that the individual looks for the means of satisfying his need. Whether his immediate goal is food, air, money, friends, or any other of the countless goals he may seek in his effort to maintain and enhance his phenomenal self, he looks for it, for the most part, in his environment. He is always seeking some goal, because his need to maintain and build up his phenomenal self is insatiable. So he is constantly and persistently exploring this non-self part of his field, which he assumes to be external reality. As a result of his explorations he is constantly changing his field. This process of search and change is a process of differentiation from the total situation under the stress of need. It is an effort to satisfy need. Therefore only those characters emerge with clarity in the phenomenal environment which are, at least tentatively, pertinent to the attainment of the individual's immediate goals. Since these goals differ from one individual to another, the phenomenal environments of two people in the same objective environment may and often do differ very widely. A ten-year-old boy from a lower socio-economic class and a thirty-year-old, middle-class woman teacher, for instance, are living in quite different worlds. The behavior which is of value to the teacher in the pursuit of her goals would be a positive detriment to the boy in the pursuit of his. As a result the whole system of values, meanings, and even many of the objects are different in their two fields.

Admittedly this is an extreme case. But it serves to illustrate the difference between the external phenomenal fields of teachers and individual pupils which has presented traditional education with its most characteristic problems and techniques. Traditionally, education has attempted to change the behavior of individuals by bringing about changes in the non-self aspect of the phenomenal field. The main efforts of the traditional teacher are directed toward giving the child information about his environment.

From a phenomenological point of view this is a valid objective of education ; but it is not the basic one. In the first place verbal information and knowledge about the world does not have as much influence

upon behavior as the pre-Freudian philosophers thought. People often do "what they know better than." In the second place there are a number of reasons why the change in the "external" field which the schools seek is seldom achieved in the way teachers intend.

#### THE STUDENT'S GOALS ARE PERSONAL

"To control or change the behavior of any individual, it is necessary to change his phenomenal field. The process of change in the field is one of differentiation, that is of the emergence of new entities and characters from the undifferentiated ground. This process of differentiation is an aspect of the efforts of the individual to maintain and increase the organization of his field and, in particular, to maintain and enhance his phenomenal self. In other words, learning and remembering are aspects of an active, purposeful, and continuous process carried on by the individual for the satisfaction of his need."<sup>3</sup>

It should be noticed that the student's differentiation of his field is not only directed toward the satisfaction of his need for self-maintenance and enhancement, it is directed toward the *immediate* satisfaction of this need. In the exploration of his field the differentiations which seem likely to achieve this end are continued and perfected and the perceptions which seem less promising are abandoned as soon as their uselessness is perceived. People do work toward long range objectives, it is true, but only in the general sense that these long range objectives have determined the selection of the more immediate goals which they are consciously trying to reach.<sup>4</sup>

A student seeking self-enhancement, for instance, decides to become a teacher. So he registers in a teachers' college. To graduate he must secure a passing mark in his educational psychology course. He comes to class. But he cannot postpone his need for self-enhancement until he becomes a teacher. He must seek it in the immediate situation in the classroom in which his long range efforts towards self-enhancement have trapped him. Only to the extent that the situation in that classroom gives him immediate satisfaction of need will he become or

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter III, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> This immediate character of perception is true of memory as well. Memory is a form of perception in which the perceptions differentiate from the part of the individual's field which he regards as "the past."

remain an active participant. Lecturers who believe that their students are hanging on every word forget their own woolgathering at some of the lectures they attend. Children are no less human. A request to think about a problem the individual does not yet have does not lead to serious or earnest effort on the part of anyone, child or adult. Even if he knows that he may have to meet that problem in the future there is little likelihood of active effort. We are all too much in need of immediate reassurance and enhancement to spend much time solving problems we do not have and pursuing "goals" we do not desire. Time enough for that later. Right now, we have to do the things which are important now. As a result children who do not own houses remain quite uninterested in the paper-hanging problems in arithmetic, and students who have elected psychology as a means to more and better dates are usually bored by lectures on learning curves or chronaxie.

The insistence of the child on pursuing his own immediate ends sometimes arouses a great deal of indignation from his elders, who are apt to feel that the only decent way to behave is by conforming to their plans and thus ministering to their needs; but the point of view of the student is necessarily different. It is quite likely that much of the conflict between pupils and teachers which still occurs in schools is due to the fact that the schools are run by people who are chiefly concerned with preparing the student for his functions in adult life and are filled with students who want to satisfy their needs here and now. As a result, the teachers are concerned with facts and skills for use in adult life and the students are chiefly concerned with more immediate goals. Each group is apt to find the other quite obtuse and unreasonable.

As long as our schools persist in attempting to direct the child into activities which do not provide him with opportunities for immediate self-enhancement children will show great ingenuity in avoiding these activities. They must do so in order to concentrate on their immediate personal problems, which are the only things important to them. The traditional school has countered this refusal to deal with material which has no personal value by inventing the conventional system of marking and promotion. This gives the non-enhancing material an artificial self-reference through requiring its mastery as a condition

for avoiding censure or for securing a satisfactory mark. This makes the material a matter of concern to the pupils who have differentiated success in school as a means of self-enhancement and it is, after a fashion, learned. However the victim of this trickery does not allow himself to be put upon. He maintains his integrity by dropping the material from his field at the earliest possible moment, usually as soon as the mark has been assured. This state of affairs often results in the pupil's disregard of the subject matter entirely except as a vehicle for gaining approval or avoiding disapproval. And what he does or how he behaves toward it will depend on whose approval he is trying to gain.

#### MEANINGS ARE MOST IMPORTANT

This brings us to another reason why direct attempts to teach facts and skills not pertinent to the immediate need of the students so seldom achieve their intended results. The important thing in the determination of behavior is, not the objective description of objects and facts in the phenomenal field, but the meaning that those objects and facts have for the individual. This meaning is found in the relationship of the object to the phenomenal self, in the role which the object or fact is felt to have in the satisfaction of need. The work of Norman Maier indicates that objects differentiated from the field as a means to one goal may be correspondingly harder to experience with another meaning. It is, therefore, very important that the fact or object emerge with a meaning which will make it most useful for the future satisfaction of need. If it is differentiated as something to be avoided it becomes less available for future use. If it is differentiated with too narrow a meaning it will also be less available. Maier's subjects, by becoming accustomed to pliers as pliers, became less able to perceive them as possible pendulum weights (*120, 121, 122, 123*).

Unfortunately, material forced upon students without consideration of their present need and immediate goals tends to acquire a meaning which makes it less useful in the satisfaction of need than if it had never been studied. Since it does not assist the satisfaction of need, its intrusion into the field simply creates additional difficulty for the student. The demand that he abandon his current problems and turn to the study of the required material is pretty sure to cause him to



regard that material as an obstacle to self-enhancement, as something to be avoided, a negative goal. If he remembers it at all after the examination is over he remembers it with this meaning and behaves toward it accordingly.

In the light of this analysis it is very disturbing to consider what we are actually doing, especially in the colleges and secondary schools. Traditionally these schools are concerned with the teaching of facts and the development of principles about "society," "nature," "the world," "the physical universe," and other aspects of our "external" environment. A tremendous effort has been made to change the phenomenal environment of the student, to teach him that the world is round, that 2 and 2 are 4, that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides of a right triangle, and thousands of other facts which occasionally turn out to be useful in later life. But no organized effort at all is made toward changing the student's picture of himself, which is even more important in determining his behavior. To make matters worse the relation between the self and non-self aspects of the phenomenal field is neglected completely.

This prepsychological (or at least pre-Freudian) emphasis on the non-self part of the phenomenal field as if it were the sole cause of behavior has led the traditional teacher to the use of formal methods of presentation and demonstration which are highly unrealistic and ineffective. One of the primary reasons for the ineffectiveness of our formal methods of teaching is that facts exist in the phenomenal field of an individual only if they have personal meaning for him. Facts that have no relation to him or his life task do not emerge into awareness, or they cease to exist in his field as soon as their irrelevance is discovered. Given sufficient time, the degree of differentiation is proportionate to the degree of self-reference. It follows, therefore, that the schools have set themselves an impossible task as long as they attempt to modify the behavior of their students by trying to teach objective facts, that is, facts which have been stripped of their personal relation to the learner. To present the bare facts without considering or planning for the meaning which those facts will assume in the field of the student is to leave the meanings, which are the

important things, to chance. If we wish a child to like a new food we give him the opportunity to eat it when he is hungry, when it will acquire the meaning we wish it to have. We do not, if we are wise, offer it to him when it will not satisfy his need; nor do we force it upon him under circumstances which humiliate or disgust him. Some parents, it is true, do make such mistakes but teachers should be better trained.

#### MEANINGS CANNOT BE FULLY VERBALIZED

The meaning of any object or event is the relation which it has to the phenomenal self of the perceiver. It is his perception of its effect upon himself and his efforts at self-maintenance and self-enhancement. This meaning always includes some awareness of the body tensions and stresses which are aspects of the situation. These aspects, the changes in blood pressure and heart beat, the changes in muscle tonus, in postural and secretory activity are not often differentiated well enough to be verbalized except in such general terms as "terrifying," "disgusting," "comfortable," "nice," and other terms which include the individual's perception of his own physiological responses. In most cases the awareness of these physical changes does not emerge even that far into figure; but even as ground components of the field they are essential aspects of the meaning of any object or event. Other non-symbolized or repressed differentiations may have similar effects. It is quite likely that our inability to communicate and share meanings with more exactness is due to our inability to find verbal symbols for the physiological aspects of our experiences. As long as they remain ground they are undifferentiated and therefore uncommunicable; even when they emerge into figure they often cannot be nailed down by verbal symbols and communicated so that the listener or reader will also experience the visceral and muscular changes. The result is that we rarely are able to communicate meanings fully and accurately. The highly differentiated aspects of the situation to which our verbalizations are confined are too abstract, too external, too divorced from the physiological ground, to carry the true warmth and richness of meaning from one person to another. Students who are taught by verbal means alone are sure to behave as if most of the material they

study is without relation to themselves, as indeed it is, until they actually experience the situations the books and teachers are talking about.

In general, the problem of communicating meanings is so difficult that it is often much more practical to help students discover the meaning of objects and events by actual experience than to try to convey them verbally. Furthermore, the meanings are bound to differ from one person to another because the object or event will play different roles in different fields. It will have different potentialities for different people.

#### MEANINGS DIFFER FROM INDIVIDUAL TO INDIVIDUAL

No two people ever share the same phenomenal field. In any objective situation and from each school subject the individual selects only those aspects which are pertinent to the achievement of his goals at that time. Because each fact and field of subject matter thus has very different meanings to different people, efforts to reform education by changes in the curriculum, although they may be helpful, are bound to fall short of expectations. We cannot reform education by this method alone, because the same curriculum means so many different things to different people. For example the famous "hundred books" can be extraordinarily rich sources of growth and enlightenment to students who have identified themselves with their own society and are seeking to understand it and its problems. The same books, on the other hand, are mere compilations of irrelevant and boring opinion to people who read them "to learn what great men have thought," "to become cultured," or to acquire college credit. In the same way a student in a Latin class may learn a great deal about Roman politics, or about poetry, or about basic grammar. He may also learn how to cheat without being caught, how to avoid being called upon by the teacher, or how to wriggle his ears to entertain the people behind him.

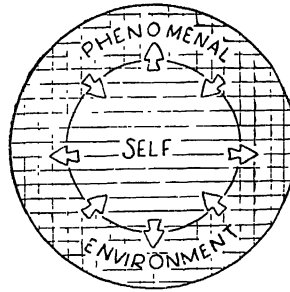
#### THE FUNCTION OF SUBJECT MATTER

We do not mean to imply that what a given student will learn in a given course or in a given situation is a matter of chance. What we have been saying is just the opposite. Discovery and learning, like all

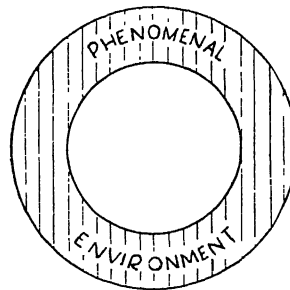
other behavior, are efforts of the individual to satisfy need. Any given individual will differentiate from the field only that which helps him toward the satisfaction of need at that moment. When the student's immediate goal is reached his differentiations in that direction naturally cease. He learns no more about anything than he finds necessary. This "laziness" and "inattention" to the demands of the teacher and the school seems reprehensible to the teacher. It may even seem perverse and abnormal. But from the point of view of the individual it is simply efficiency. Failure to learn what the teacher wishes does not mean that he has ceased to learn. It only means that he has turned to more promising objectives and is searching his field for ways and means of reaching them. If the subject matter presented by the school promises to assist him in the immediate satisfaction of need and is within his ability to differentiate, he will learn it. If it does not assist him or (the same thing) is beyond his capacity, he will discover how to evade learning it. Essentially the control of learning is in the hands of the student, not in the hands of the teacher.

It seems obvious, therefore, that any system of education which concerns itself only with the formal presentation of standard subject matter without considering the individual student's point of view will affect different persons very differently. Subject matter and methods which have a desirable effect on the development and behavior of one student may have a very undesirable effect on the development and behavior of another. As a result any formalized system of education, whether method-centered or subject-matter-centered, is too unpredictable and erratic in outcome to be safely used by a highly integrated, democratic society. In such a society one ignorant, maladjusted, or disaffected individual may menace the life and happiness of people all over the world. No member is unimportant. As a voter, as a producer, as an inhabitant of the same world, the behavior of each citizen affects the lives of all. In such a society the education of no individual can safely be left to chance. To confine our educational effort to the production of change in the external part of the student's phenomenal field is to leave far too much to chance. The series of diagrams in Fig. 6 may illustrate the point. The top one schematically shows the entire phenomenal field of an individual. The middle shows

*The Phenomenal Field*  
(The basis of behavior)



*The Phenomenal Environment*



*The Curriculum*  
(The subject matter of traditional education)

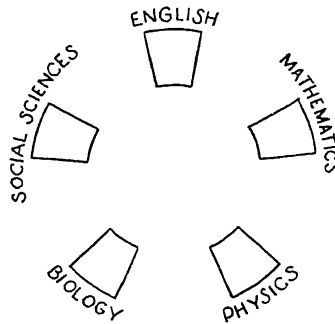


FIG. 6. The Phenomenal Field and the Curriculum.

the external part of the field only. This is the part accepted by traditional education as its entire field of action. The third shows the external field as it is divided among various fields of subject matter, each taught without reference to the phenomenal self and with many gaps and some overlapping. For several years educators have recognized the inadequacy of the bottom situation and have attempted to

remedy it by breaking down the subject matter boundaries and "correlating" the subjects to show the student their essential unity. If this could be done successfully it would enlarge the field of education to the field shown in the middle diagram. But if our analysis of behavior is correct even this would not help a great deal. To be really effective education will have to accept the task of dealing with the whole phenomenal field of the individual, of planning changes in his perception of himself as well as in his perception of his environment. This is necessary not only because of the dominant role which the phenomenal self plays in the determination of behavior but because of the organized and unified nature of the phenomenal field.

#### THE PHENOMENAL FIELD IS ORGANIZED

Because the individual's phenomenal field is organized and unified, no item of knowledge or act of skill can be learned without affecting the whole field. If we are really concerned about behavior, arithmetic, for instance, cannot be taught solely as arithmetic, because the students during that class are also learning to think of themselves as competent or incompetent, liked or disliked, honest or dishonest. These changes in their phenomenal fields may be, much more important in terms of future behavior, than the arithmetic skills on which the teacher is presumably concentrating. These learnings are of primary importance to behavior and they must not be left to chance. The unified field demands a unified, not a piecemeal, education. Education must concern itself, not only with the non-self aspects of the field but with the self aspects as well.

#### THE PHENOMENAL SELF

The "incidental" learnings we have just been describing represent changes in the phenomenal self, that is, in the very core of the phenomenal field. The phenomenal self is the most important part of the field to the learner, to whom it is "I." It is also an important part of the field to anyone studying his behavior. Since behavior must be appropriate to the phenomenal self, changes in the phenomenal self are invariably followed by changes in behavior. We have already cited instances of such changes in other chapters. Lecky (107) has reported

a number of cases of pupils who, after undergoing changes of the self-concept, have made startling improvement in their level of achievement, often without tutoring.

"A high school student who misspelled 55 words out of a hundred, and who failed so many subjects that he lost credit for a full year, became one of the best spellers in the school during the next year, and made a general average of 91. . . . A girl who had failed four times in Latin, with marks between 20 and 50, after three talks with the school counselor made a mark of 92 in the next test and finished with a mark of 84. She is now taking advanced Latin with grades above 80" (107, pp. 120-121).

The following case report, written by a teacher, further illustrates the important role played by the phenomenal self in behavior.

Roger is twelve years old, almost three years older than any other child in the class. He has failed three different terms in school and was passed into the 6th grade this year only because of his age. Achievement and other tests at the end of the year showed little improvement over what he accomplished on the tests given in September. He has had psychological tests three times: once when he was 7, again when he was 9, and once more this spring. Test results showed that he has normal intelligence and is abnormal in no way. He has never learned to read although there is no physical or mental obstruction to his ability to learn. He is far beyond the average child in his ability to converse and shows remarkable common sense and judgement for a child his age. He surpasses most of the class in reasoning out classroom problems not connected with schoolwork. He has a wonderful personality and is well liked by all the other children although the boys call him a sissy. Roger firmly believes that he was born without a brain and that it is impossible for him to learn. He will not attempt to do any kind of school work which involves independent thinking and constantly attempts to foresee any challenge which might confront him before the school day even begins. Upon arriving at school he might say "If we do examples at the board today I'm not going up. I'll sit in my seat because I can't do them and only take up space at the board."

When Roger started to read in the first grade, the children laughed when he made a mistake and continued to laugh at his mistakes when none of his teachers corrected the other children. This occurred in more than the first grade. Roger at first laughed with them until he suddenly refused to read aloud any more. Since then he cannot even read silently. He dislikes school and has to be practically forced to school every day. His

belief that he was "born without a brain" (and he sincerely believes this) excuses him from any thinking processes and so protects him from humiliation. He is no behavior problem as far as obeying rules, etc. and he is a very cheerful boy for, naturally, having no brain excuses one from the difficult things.

Roger was an only child until he was 7 and his mother did all the difficult things for him. When his brother was born, Roger demanded even more attention from his parents and, fearing he was jealous of the baby, the parents overworked themselves in showing their devotion. His mother tied his shoes until he was ten. I believe this dependence on someone to do all the hard things is one of Roger's problems now. Everything was made easy for him and all the difficult tasks taken over by his mother or father and now he is unable to do for himself.

He does not play with boys' but prefers to play with girls. . . . The fear of failure in the boys' games undoubtedly keeps him from entering the sports. He can run faster than the girls and beats them at their games and to him this is better than being beaten by the boys. . . . Recently his mother called me to say that though he is signed up for two weeks at Boy Scout camp, he gets almost hysterical when it is mentioned and is begging to stay home. . . .

He is at the reading clinic on the Hill this year and there has been a decided improvement in his reading accomplishment. . . . The psychological tests have been bad for Roger, I think. These have naturally given him the idea he is different and that there must be something wrong with him, especially since he has had three. After his tests this spring (which his parents insisted upon) he came to school and said "Well, they gave me some more tests to see how dumb I was." His parents have never told him the results of the tests. . . .

We tried in school to help him gain more self-confidence but when his parents refused to let him take the bus to the city alone, would not allow him to go to the movies with a group of boys and girls on Saturday afternoon unless a parent was along, our work did little good.

The case of Roger illustrates quite well how the phenomenal self develops and how it affects behavior. This boy was treated as an incompetent by his parents, his classmates, and his teachers. He was placed in a situation where it was easier to accept this concept of himself than to reject it. As an incompetent at home he was waited on and protected. In school he found that the concept of himself as an incompetent was one which he could maintain because it was consistent with the way he was treated. His early efforts to behave as if



he were competent were greeted with ridicule, so he fell back to a position he could maintain and became a boy "born without a brain," free from the responsibility of performing the tasks which led to humiliation.<sup>5</sup> This self-concept of incompetence as a student and as a boy not only caused his withdrawal from classroom activities and from competition with boys, it also became a determining factor in the further differentiation of his phenomenal field. Facts and experiences which threatened this self were rejected or were selected in conformity with it. His experiences at the psychological clinic, for instance, might have been a source of reassurance to another child. To Roger, however, they were supporting evidence which helped to maintain his phenomenal self and the stability of his field. This boy felt that to be able, to be normal, or to be masculine would be to be a failure because it would confront him with problems and responsibilities with which he felt unable to cope. It is no wonder that his teacher was unable to reassure him.

That is what we meant when we called the phenomenal self the core of behavior. It is the self as the individual experiences it. From his point of view it is what behaves and as a consequence all of his (its) behavior is appropriate to it. It is also the most constant and relatively stable part of the field, the part which is always present, that part which is consciously protected and maintained. To our minds Roger's concept of himself was distinctly unsatisfactory; but it was the only self he knew and he had to defend and maintain it. He also had to build it up and enhance it, but the techniques he used were of necessity those which were in harmony with his own estimate of himself.

The case of Roger is unusual only in the clear-cut visibility of the mechanisms involved. It is easy to see in his case that the determining force which gave the individual character and direction to his behavior was the phenomenal self. Roger with a different perception of himself would have behaved very differently. So would any person.

This presents all schools and all teachers with a new responsibility. If we are to deal effectively with behavior we must consider what our students think of themselves. Indeed we must, if our assumptions are

<sup>5</sup> In a similar way young children who feel inadequate as children may like to play that they are babies or dogs because they can play those roles more acceptably. See also, Mead (132).

correct, frankly assume the responsibility for helping our students to perceive themselves in ways that will be more satisfactory to them and, through the resulting behavior, to others. Because of the predominant influence of the phenomenal self on behavior, the development of such a phenomenal self by each student would seem to be a primary responsibility for us all.

#### WHAT KIND OF PHENOMENAL SELVES DO WE WANT TO DEVELOP?

In any society, but particularly in a society as complex as our own, an identical pattern of personality and behavior for all persons would be impossible and undesirable. Under those circumstances society simply could not function. The high degree of specialization of labor in any civilization, for instance, demands a great variety of people with different skills and attitudes. A standardization upon one definite personality type, if it were possible, would tend to freeze the society and make it dangerously rigid when confronted by new conditions and a changed environment.<sup>6</sup> For these and other reasons it seems very unwise to set up any particular phenomenal self as an ideal and pattern toward which our educational efforts should be directed.

From the point of view of either the individual or of the other members of society a more flexible pattern is desirable. From either point of view the most satisfactory phenomenal self is that which has been defined in our discussion of people under threat: "A phenomenal self is adequate in the degree to which it is capable of accepting into its organization any and all aspects of reality" (page 136). An individual with a relatively high ability to accept reality will not only be able to deal more effectively with his environment and use it productively in the satisfaction of his need; he will find it less necessary and less tempting to attempt the satisfaction of his need in unsocial or antisocial ways.

<sup>6</sup> Something like this did happen in Sparta, which collapsed soon after its victory over Athens. Toynbee (209) has pointed out that in its last struggle the leadership and initiative was largely in the hands of the women, whose education was less rigid and standardized than that of the men. The men, expected to cope with a situation for which their specialized military personality was inadequate, seem to have become completely demoralized.

## EDUCATIONAL TECHNIQUES AND THE ADEQUATE SELF

The ways in which the schools can assist their students in the development of such satisfactory and desirable self-concepts cannot be planned as a rigid syllabus of experiences or activities because the experiences and achievements which give self-enhancement and confidence to a person at one stage of his life may be profoundly unsatisfactory to another person or to the same person at another time. Praise from the teacher for instance, can represent either self-enhancement or humiliation to different children or in different circumstances. It is possible, however, to make some assumptions about the general techniques which schools which deliberately set out to develop adequate self-concepts in their pupils would use.

1. Such schools would provide each pupil with every possible opportunity to think of himself as a responsible citizen and a contributing member of society. They would see that he has the widest possible opportunity to identify with and be accepted by the socially desirable individuals and groups which he admires, so that he will feel accepted by and acceptable to society. (Incidentally, an individual who feels himself identified with and accepted by a society cannot attack it. To do so would be to attack himself.)

This seems to imply a need for democratic classrooms, where there is respect for the need, integrity, and potentialities of all members of the group and where all members feel free to express their opinions frankly and openly. It also implies an emphasis on coöperative activities which call for a wide variety of skills so that each student will have opportunities to gain a sense of self-enhancement and personal worth from his contribution to the group. It implies a more appreciative attitude by adults, especially teachers, toward children's ambitions and achievements (116).

2. Such a school would provide its pupils with a wide variety of opportunities for success and appreciation through productive achievement. Under such conditions children would not only have greater opportunity to gain self-enhancement through the discovery of their talents and areas of strength, they would also have greater opportu-

nities to discover their weaknesses and inadequacies under conditions in which they feel adequate enough to acknowledge and deal with them.

Other things being equal more pupils will have opportunities for success and self-enhancement if: (1) The achievements are evaluated by standards appropriate to the age and experience of the pupil. (2) The activity is chosen and planned by the pupils themselves. (3) The contributions of different members of the same class are so different in type that no comparisons are possible. (4) If the activity is appropriate to the abilities, maturation level and goals of the student. The selection of activities on this basis is usually better done by the students than by the teacher (140). It need not be feared that children, in a situation where they are able to move freely toward self-enhancement, will select activities which are "too easy" for them. Such activities do not lead to self-enhancement and are chosen only when the individual is under threat. In such a situation he attempts to protect himself from failure by reverting to an activity he has already mastered.<sup>7</sup>

This program of diversification of activities should not be prevented by the plea that the present subjects of instruction are of such unique importance that all must become proficient in all of them. Our society is one of coöperation among specialists. The 1940 United States census lists more than 23,000 occupations, each of which presumably calls for its own pattern of skills and abilities. It is to the advantage of our society that all of its members should think of themselves as responsible citizens and contributing members. It is not to the advantage of society that all have the same skills and items of information. Indeed it is preferable that they do not.

The essential point is that the student, to acquire a satisfactory feeling of competence and acceptability, must grow up having success experiences and being accepted. Many students, it is true, do win these experiences. But when we recognize that *every* student must have such experiences in order to become a happy and productive

<sup>7</sup> On the basis of phenomenological theory this should happen very frequently among children taught by autocratic, critical teachers. For that reason self-selection of subject matter and activities are not likely to be successful as means of promoting learning in traditional schools.

member of society the defects of all but a few of our schools are at once apparent.

*The Competitive Marking System.* People will behave only in ways that are appropriate to their own pictures of themselves. People who have learned to think of themselves as competent, successful, and acceptable will undertake more tasks and persist longer against difficulties than those who have learned that they are incompetent and unsuccessful (96, 97). It is a profligate waste of our national resources to teach millions of people to think of themselves as mediocre, incompetent, or failures at activities which are socially desirable and even essential. Every person who accepts such a concept of himself cuts down the standard of living, the safety, and security of his fellow citizens. He becomes less of an asset and more of a liability. Yet this is precisely what many of our schools are now doing by requiring all children to compete in a narrow range of verbal activities, and giving recognition only to the winners.

This brings us to a consideration of our present marking system. To the extent that some of the activities which are now required in school are really necessary for developing skills for adult life, it is essential that all of the children, not just the few at the top of the class, have opportunities to feel successful and competent in them. But under the competitive marking system used in most schools only the top students in each class have an opportunity to acquire such concepts of themselves. The people who pay for the schools deserve in return for their sacrifice, graduates who will be willing members of society, eager and competent to do their share of its work. To behave in this way the products of our schools must feel that they are potentially competent. Whether we consider the situation from the point of view of the satisfaction and happiness of the individual or from that of his potential contribution to society, any system of education which persuades him that he is incompetent to carry on the activities required of him by society is sheer folly. We cannot afford to write off one-half or more of our population by persuading them that they are failures. There is good reason to believe that our competitive marking system is doing just this and that it should be abandoned.

Traditionally and historically the conventional view of education derives from the selective professional education of an earlier time. As a result of their origin from college preparatory schools, our public schools have maintained the fiction that their students could and should be screened and sifted, and the unfit eliminated. In a narrow sense this screening and selection is one function of our trade and professional schools, which have a social responsibility to protect the public from untrained practitioners. But in a larger sense even these schools do not perform their full function for society unless they have helped even those students who are dropped to become happier and more effective members of it. In the case of the public schools the situation is too clear for argument. Whether we like it or not, no pupil in any school can be eliminated from society. Each child will, if he lives, grow up to be a member of it, either as an asset or as a liability. It is accordingly the task of the schools to help each one to develop to his maximum potentialities as an individual and a citizen. No person can be ignored, because in a society as complex as our own the power of any one individual to disrupt its functioning and endanger the lives and satisfactions of its members has been enormously increased. Any individual who is not able to satisfy his need within the framework of his society, who does not feel an accepted member of it, is a source of danger to it and to its members.

3. Schools which assume the task of helping each student develop an adequate and productive self-concept will understand and take advantage of the tremendous drive of the individual for self-enhancement. In doing so they will find unnecessary the use of competitive marks, contests, and special awards as a means of motivating school work.

Attempts to stir up competitive efforts are sometimes defended on the ground that society is fiercely competitive and that the children must be taught to compete ruthlessly. As a matter of fact, no society can afford to countenance indiscriminate competition because the main function of any society is to insure coöperation among its members. The positions of leadership in our society are characteristically held, not by the ruthless competitors, but by coöperative individuals who have won the trust and confidence of their groups. Any person who is

as indiscriminately competitive as many of our schools would encourage him to be is distrusted by adults and by children. It is not in schools alone that the fierce competitor is disliked and distrusted. He is called a chiseler in business, a rate buster in industry. Even when the group resistance to such a person is slight, he lives under a heavy psychological handicap because he assumes that other people are animated by the same competitive point of view. As a consequence he lives in a constant state of tension and threat.

Abandonment of the marking system would not mean that evaluation of results should be eliminated from the schools. Quite the contrary. It would mean that the child would be freed from threat and the fear of low marks and therefore be much more able to recognize defects in his work and accept responsibility for them. Many teachers have found that the most effective type of evaluation is that made by the student himself in a situation where he is free from threat and dealing with a sympathetic adult. This role cannot be played by a taskmaster or a policeman.

The criticisms we have made of the use of competitive marks and of teacher dictatorship will seem impractical to many parents and teachers. "Granted," they might say, "that competition and coercion have all the disadvantages that you have cited. But if you abandon them, how will you get children to work?"

Such criticism would fail to take into account the fact that in shifting the major purpose of education from the acquisition of subject matter to the development of an adequate phenomenal self we have shifted to an activity for which the child does not need to be motivated. Building a satisfactory phenomenal self is the primary motive of his every act. His basic need is for the preservation and enhancement of his phenomenal self. The school does not need to offer any inducements to cause him to seek this end. He is constantly seeking it. All that the school needs to do is to help him in his efforts to achieve it.

## Σ CHAPTER XI Σ

### *The Task of the Teacher*

#### I. EDUCATION AS THE PROMOTION OF INTELLIGENT BEHAVIOR

IF we wish to give a universal definition of the kind of behavior which education seeks to promote we have to say merely that education is an attempt to promote wise, intelligent behavior. This is a definition of the purpose of education which could hold true in all societies, for all times, and for all people. It is quite true that this statement of the desired result of education is more general than those which are usually given; but a more definite and specific description of the kind of behavior which should result from education can be dangerous. Conditions change and any society which sets out to concentrate on securing a specific type of behavior from its citizens runs the risk of getting it under conditions where it is valueless or even undesirable. Other nations beside the Spartans have had this happen to them. For the good of our society and its members, it is better to wish for intelligent behavior than for good penmanship, or the ability to diagram a declarative sentence, or any of the other limited objectives which may or may not be valuable means of need satisfaction in the future.

From the phenomenological point of view there are four different ways of helping an individual to behave intelligently, that is effectively, in any particular situation. These ways have been listed, in an earlier chapter, as (1) increasing the physiological potentialities of the behavior, (2) increasing the potentialities in the behavior's physical environment, (3) providing more time for the effective solution of his problems, and (4) removing psychological restraints upon his behavior. In the final analysis whether or not the individual is free



to satisfy his need or to develop an adequate self will depend upon how effectively his society is able to perform those functions.

IMPROVING THE PHYSIOLOGICAL POTENTIALITIES  
OF THE BEHAVIOR

While evidence linking low intelligence test scores to defects of the glands, sense organs, and nervous system is well known, less attention has been paid to those studies (23, 140, 141) which link the general level of physical development and vigor with the intelligence quotient. The relations found between physical vigor and intelligence test scores is not too high; but this should not be taken to mean that an individual's physical condition has no relation to the effectiveness of his behavior. The results of food deprivation and faulty nutrition are much more evident in the behavior of people engaged in relatively long term tasks such as a semester's work in school than in brief and well-motivated tasks like intelligence tests (188).

It is the long time productivity of the individual however, which is the truer test of his value to society. At the very least a healthy, vigorous person is able to persist longer in his efforts toward an adequate solution of his problems than a person with a smaller fund of energy. This ground alone justifies a strong effort by the schools to increase the health and physical effectiveness of their pupils. A number of things can be done by the schools which will further this objective. The first step is to provide a healthful physical environment while the student is in school. Fresh air and water, adequate rest, frequent and adequate physical examinations, protection against infection, and good food in a well-balanced diet are things which should be available to all. Formal courses in health and hygiene have proved almost valueless when judged by the health of the students participating; but there is a wide field of opportunity, almost untried, for improving health by building up the prestige of good health practices.

Since much illness is either directly or indirectly of psychogenic origin one of the most important things the schools could do to further the health and personal effectiveness of their students would be to

provide an atmosphere where all students would have greater opportunities for the direct satisfaction of need, so that the individual student would have less need to use illness or physically debilitating activities as a means of self-maintenance and enhancement.

#### PROMOTING INTELLIGENT BEHAVIOR BY CHANGE IN THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

An effective limit to any individual's behavior is set by the physical environment from which his phenomenal field is derived. It is quite true that the individual selects his phenomenal field according to his need for self-maintenance and enhancement; but the raw material for the field is derived from and is therefore limited by the physical environment in which he lives or has lived. Southern mountaineers score low on standard intelligence tests (*11*). Had Bell grown up in a savage community he would never have invented the telephone; people who have never been part of a democratic group have no opportunity to learn democratic ways; people who have not been accepted cannot think of themselves as being acceptable. The potentialities of any individual's phenomenal field are basically limited by the potentialities of the physical field, past and present, from which it was derived.<sup>1</sup>

The schools have always recognized the limiting effect which the lack of experience and information have on behavior and have taken the removal of this limitation as their chief task. One measure of their success is to be found in the steady rise in the intelligence test score

<sup>1</sup>Producers of intelligence tests recognize this and attempt to restrict the information required in their tests to that which all children have had an opportunity to learn. The failure of test designers to satisfy this criterion completely may be one reason why children from homes in the higher socio-economic levels tend to make superior scores.

An interesting example of a test item which does not measure up to this criterion of equal opportunity for learning is to be found in the Terman-Merrill test, Form M. In this item children are asked to identify a model of a type of telephone which the Bell Company began to replace in 1926. In 1930, when the test was being developed, there were 43,000,000 families in the United States but only 19,000,000 telephones. It is quite obvious that at the time the test was standardized children in the higher socio-economic levels had the better chance to pass this item. At the present time, when very few phones of this type are still in use, the validity of the item for rating purposes is even more doubtful. Many farm children call the model a "pump," calling the receiver "the handle" and the mouthpiece "the spout."

of the average American adult in the last thirty years. The median raw score in the Army Alpha by native-born white males was 61 in 1918 and 101 in 1942 (205). The median IQ on group tests of East Tennessee mountain children rose from 82 in 1930 to 93 in 1940 (216). Similar results have been reported from Honolulu between 1927 and 1938 (204).

It should not be thought, however, that the provision of a more complex physical environment or an "enriched curriculum" will, of itself, result in more intelligent behavior. Millions of people saw apples fall before Newton did, but it is unlikely that any of them experienced the earth-apple relationship as he did. Differentiation of the field, like all other activities of the individual, is an active process, directed toward the satisfaction of need. An enriched environment merely provides more possibilities for intelligent behavior, it cannot guarantee it. An environment or a course of study which provides great opportunities for learning and self-enhancement to one person may provide only the certainty of failure to another, or to the first individual if he is placed in it before he is ready. In helping any individual to more effective behavior by enlarging his phenomenal field two things need to be kept in mind. First, enlargement of the physical environment will confront him with more difficulties unless the resultant phenomenal field contains resources which he can use in the satisfaction of need. Second, these resources will be of no value unless he is ready and able to make at least some of the helpful differentiations and achievements that the new field makes possible. We have known for some time that it is not only useless but harmful to require a child to read before he has enough knowledge of English, of the world in general, and of the symbols that are used, to make the required differentiations. The phenomenological point of view suggests that the same principle holds good in arithmetic, in history, in athletics, and in social activities.

In promoting intelligent behavior by adding to the physical resources at the student's command the teacher has two basic responsibilities: to help the student discover the areas which are appropriate and potentially helpful to the achievement of his goals through socially desirable means, and to arrange the situation so that the solution may

be discovered by the student in the most efficient and productive way. In other words, the methods used should be those which make the student increasingly independent of the teacher. In the traditional school, books have been the chief mechanism for the enlargement of the individual's field. At the present time, however, increase in transportation facilities and the use of motion pictures, phonographs, radios, school shops, laboratories, and studios have vastly increased the facilities for achieving this result.

#### PROVIDING MORE TIME FOR A SOLUTION

It is the central thesis of this book that behavior is determined directly and completely by the phenomenal field at the instant of action. No matter how rich the possibilities seen by others, the effectiveness of any person's behavior is limited by the differentiations which exist in his field at that crucial moment. It is quite possible that the physical environment always contains the means for reaching our goals; but these resources are quite useless to us unless we have discovered them and perfected the techniques for using them.

#### DIFFERENTIATION TAKES TIME

It cannot be achieved instantaneously. The perceptual field of a skilled worker, of a gifted artist, of a discerning counselor does not emerge instantly, or even overnight. The perceptual discriminations necessary even for such almost universal skills as walking, talking, reading and writing require years for their development. Even breathing seems to be something which has to be learned (157). Some differentiations do seem to be made very fast, but they are not instantaneous even then. The sudden emergence, when it does occur, is merely the final step in a long series of differentiations which have taken a great deal of time.

If an individual is suddenly confronted with an emergency, if he is placed in a situation where time for adequate differentiation is lacking, his behavior is confused, inadequate, and "unintelligent." This is because he is operating in a confused, poorly differentiated field. At least it is poorly differentiated in terms of his need. If he has to start at the beginning at each moment of crisis he will never have time to make the required differentiations. Many of these, if he

is to act wisely, will have to be made beforehand. The time to differentiate, the time to solve the problem, common sense insists, is before the problem arises, while time is still available. That is what most teachers mean when they speak of education as preparation for life.

#### DIFFERENTIATION IS MOTIVATED BY IMMEDIATE NEED

"Preparation for life" is good sense, as far as it goes. It is obvious that the way to have time enough tomorrow is to do part of the work today. Parents expect their children to do just that in school. But there is a catch. The catch is that, as we have pointed out already, people differentiate from the field only what is helpful to the attainment of their present goals. And school children have different goals than adults, partly because they are children and partly because they are in that special type of institution which we call a school. As a result they discover those techniques and make those differentiations which are most effective in securing their self-enhancement in the school situation instead of discovering those techniques and making those differentiations which will be most effective in the adult situation for which they are "being prepared." It is probable that educators will be a long time working out a completely satisfactory answer to this problem, which seems a major cause of ineffectiveness and inefficiency in education today.

It is a problem peculiar to a culture in which childhood is put aside as a non-productive period, in which children are not allowed to become productive members of society. In most primitive societies, where the economic and social contributions of children are needed and welcome, the problem does not exist. In such societies the work of adults and children is so much alike that the solution of childhood problems is often equivalent to the solution of adult problems. The child, in striving for satisfaction of his immediate need, is automatically "preparing for future life" as well.<sup>2</sup>

In a complex and highly specialized society like our own we cannot

<sup>2</sup> Children, in American society, are restricted to a type of economic non-participation which is akin to that imposed, for religious reasons, on Toda women. Since these members of a dairying tribe are not allowed to handle any milk product and since clothing is purchased from another tribe their economic functions are restricted to sweeping out some rooms of the house. As we should expect, Rivers (159) found them markedly inferior to the men in psychological tests.

go back to the educational practices of primitive times. To do so would bring our civilization to a speedy end. However, we would do well to bring our children into closer touch with adult society by giving them greater opportunities to become participating members. This cannot be achieved by make-believe activities such as Boys' States and Junior Governments, although they both, along with socio-drama techniques, are a long step in the right direction. Student governments, if they really govern, are of great value to the participants. As a step toward social membership, work-study plans have been very effective in many vocational schools; but for the purposes of general education a much wider program is needed. The best training in citizenship, for instance, is secured by children actively engaged in activities they have devised for the betterment of their community. The practices of some southern schools whose students have contributed to their communities by reclaiming waste land, doing contour plowing, establishing canning centers, and finding new markets for community products are outstanding examples of effective education. The activities mentioned can be planned and carried out by young people in their teens; and in almost all communities even younger children can make real contributions to the public welfare. To the extent that they can gain recognition and acceptance for these activities they will inevitably develop concepts of themselves and their surroundings which will be very beneficial to them and to society in later life.

This does not mean that a school program is without value unless the child is making an immediate contribution to the community. Even when the school program is, from the point of view of adults, almost purely make-believe, it can be of great value in preparing the child for adult life if it allows and helps him to attack his own immediate problems, whatever they may be. The effective individual in any society is a person whose relations with other people are satisfactory. A school program, consequently, which emphasizes the value of the individual and helps him to make effective adjustments to other people is truly preparing children for the future. The school can best guarantee that a child will develop into a non-threatened, non-threatening, and socially effective person by providing him with success experiences and a non-threatening, accepting atmosphere when he

is a child. Having self-respect now will help him to develop a phenomenal self which will be less threatened in the future and therefore more effective in exploring his environment and dealing with other people. This is the adequate personality we have discussed in the preceding chapter.

#### CHILDREN CANNOT SOLVE PROBLEMS THEY DO NOT HAVE

Superficially, it seems logical to suppose that one way to insure the intelligent solution of a problem in adult life is to require the child to solve that problem in childhood. Occasionally, just once in a while, the method may work. If he wants to solve the problem at that time and if his childish solution is one which will be effective if he repeats it in adult life the operation will have gone according to plan. But it is just as likely that his solution may turn out to be so childish, because it is a child's response to a child's evaluation of an adult's problem, that he will find it completely useless or even harmful if he attempts to use it in adult life. Of course there is little likelihood that he will try to repeat the childhood solution. If he regards himself as an adult he will evaluate the situation differently and consequently behave differently. In neither case, however, will the result be what the teacher intended.

When the training is done in a highly formalized classroom there is still another possibility. It often happens that the student's perception of the problem and his consequent solution are so affected by the classroom situation and conventions that he does not recognize a situation for which he was trained when he encounters it outside the classroom. In the classroom the situation is one in which he is striving to avoid blame or to seek approval from his teacher or his classmates. When he encounters the same objective problem elsewhere when he is working toward different goals he does not differentiate it in the same way and does not recognize it as familiar. After the examinations have been passed the hard-won facts are effectively forgotten because the occasions for their use are never recognized.

In other words, the process of equipping children with a repertoire of specific facts, skills, and techniques which will enable them to meet specific situations in adult life proves as impractical in theory

as many generations of frustrated teachers have already found it to be in practice. When a child works out a solution or develops a skill which he uses later in adult life it must be because the problems were phenomenally equivalent at the two ages. This kind of specific learning for future use is most apt to occur in situations where the child is dealing with simple physical objects and forces, whose meaning to the individual tends to be relatively constant throughout life. We can learn as children to button up our overcoats, to ride bicycles, and to saw boards straight and we can keep those skills and use them the rest of our lives. We cannot, however, do so well in learning how to plan a family budget or in learning how to work with other adults.

The possibility of effective transfer of specific learning to adult life is markedly diminished if the problem situation, like most school-room and other social situations, is one where adults and children play markedly different roles. The techniques perfected by the children in such situations are necessarily inappropriate for use by adults. The truth is that attempts to give children specific training for situations they will encounter only as adults are pretty sure to be ineffective.

However, there are other ways of saving time for the adult which are more reliable and which should result in more mature and effective solutions when the need for action does arise. It will save time in later crises if the child is given an increased opportunity and freedom to differentiate the solutions of his own immediate problems. This will enrich his field with a large number of concepts and perceptions which are the preliminary steps for the more precise differentiations required in adult life. Such adult solutions should be more realistic and effective than the immature solutions based upon the childish phenomenal field which he might have made earlier. If the preliminary differentiations have been thus made in childhood, the adult solution will require little time to achieve.

The function of the school and the teacher is to provide a situation where the individual is free to seek the satisfaction of his need. This means that the child must be free to explore and free to move. He must not be under threat because his concern must be exploration and



discovery and not self-protection.<sup>3</sup> This presupposes a friendly atmosphere in which the pupil feels accepted and respected.

It is also the responsibility of the school to see that the exploratory situation shall be representative of society itself. The freedom to explore also includes the freedom to become acquainted with social boundaries and limits. If the preliminary differentiations of childhood are to function as the bases for effective solutions of adult problems we must see that the consequences of a child's behavior in school are those which would normally occur elsewhere in society. Concepts derived in an unrepresentative situation are bound to be unrealistic and the holders of these concepts are bound to behave in inappropriate ways. If this is true, the schools can best guide their pupils to more accurate concepts of themselves and of society by becoming more accurately representative of the society in which the pupils are being prepared for membership. By this standard the schools with antiquated textbooks and ignorant teachers are not the only ones which are inadequate; the schools in which the children are allowed to kick the teacher and those in which the teacher is an absolute autocrat are also giving misinformation to their pupils which may result in maladaptive behavior later.

The one part of the phenomenal field which is always present is the self. It takes part in all behavior and, as a consequence, changes in an individual's phenomenal self are accompanied, in some degree, by changes in all aspects of his behavior. Another way to save time and make more intelligent behavior possible, therefore, is to help the individual develop an adequate phenomenal self so that he will be free to explore his field and work out a realistic solution of his problems.

<sup>3</sup> Contrast this with the conventional recitation procedure in which each child is asked to recite material which all other members of the class have already been required to read. In such a situation the pupil who is asked to recite can lose self-esteem by failing but cannot gain it by succeeding. Even if he makes a "perfect" recitation he cannot feel that his contribution is of value to anyone else in the group because all who value his information know it already. It is not strange that students in such situations try very hard to avoid being called upon. Teachers who have used only this method are astonished at the freedom and volubility of discussion they find in progressive schools.

## REMOVAL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESTRAINTS

In comparison with the attention they have given to the other limiting factors, educators have given little heed to the limits which are imposed upon an individual's behavior by an unsatisfactory and inadequate self-concept. People who conceive of themselves as inadequate or unacceptable to others necessarily operate under great psychological restraint. In terms of their own concepts of themselves it would be ridiculous, even impossible, for them to attempt much, since humiliation and failure would be sure to follow. As a result such people work and live at a level far below their potentialities, feeling so helpless and threatened that they are unable to explore their field freely for ways of satisfying their need (68, 73). They feel that only tremendous success can make them acceptable; and their levels of aspiration are either very high to match this concept or very low to conform to their inadequate self-concepts. In many cases the perception of the self as a failure is so strong that anything the individual achieves is automatically perceived as a failure.

It seems axiomatic that the pertinence and effectiveness of an individual's behavior is a function of the degree to which he is able to explore his environment and discover its essential characters and relations. If the psychological restraints which prevent free exploration and inquiry can be removed more intelligent behavior will result. Such results are occasionally achieved by clinical psychologists<sup>4</sup> and would be achieved much more often if we consciously sought them. Modern nursery school practice often leads effectively to these ends (208). It seems that higher levels of educational practice might well profit from this experience.

Feelings of inadequacy are not restricted to a few abnormal individuals. They exist, in some degree, in an overwhelming majority of people. A deliberate attempt by our schools to help pupils attain a higher degree of self-acceptance and self-respect would directly aid all of them in the satisfaction of need. It would also liberate so much energy and free so many of them to accept and explore reality

<sup>4</sup> Virginia Axline, for instance (*Jour. Consult. Psychol.*, 1948, 12, 209-217), reports the case of a kindergarten child with Stanford-Binet IQ's of 65 and 68 before play therapy who scored 96 near the end of therapy and 105 a year later.

that they might lift our society, which now seems threatened, to unimagined heights.

## II. THE SOCIAL STAKE IN EDUCATION

Up to this point we have treated education pretty largely from the point of view of the individual who is being educated. With occasional exceptions, when we have spoken of the schools and the methods used in the schools it has been in relation to the student's goals and the student's purposes. However, there is another point of view which must be considered. What happens to any member of our society affects in some degree the security and happiness of every other member. This is true of other societies as well as our own. As a result no society can avoid the task of educating its children. The other members of the society have too great a stake in them as potential assets or liabilities to leave their education to chance.

The function of any society is to assist its members toward the satisfaction of need. Schools, like all the other social institutions, are maintained for this end. As the agents of society, which employs them, it is the duty of teachers to provide conditions which will aid the satisfaction of need by all its members, pupils and non-pupils alike. That is, teachers are employed to help their pupils to discover and use ways of self-maintenance and self-enhancement which are beneficial, or at least not harmful, to other people as well.

This argument can be restated as follows: The individual human being is completely and continuously occupied with the business of preserving and enhancing his phenomenal self. This is not something added by social convention or by training. It is a basic characteristic of his nature as a conscious living organism attempting to maintain itself in an environment which is extended phenomenally in both space and time. Striving for self-enhancement is not a whim of the individual which can be suspended at the teacher's command while the business of education goes on. It is the basic, constant, all-pervading life purpose of every individual, the sole motive of his every act.

The purpose of education is to assist human beings toward the satisfaction of this need. Since the schools are agencies of society,

they are concerned with the need satisfaction of all its members. It is therefore their purpose to free the individual to work for self-enhancement in ways which are consistent with the needs of others in his society. It is our purpose in the remainder of this chapter to discuss how this can best be achieved.

### HOW EDUCATION TAKES PLACE

Behavior, in the phenomenological frame of reference, is completely determined by and pertinent to the phenomenal field of the behavior at the moment of action. To change the individual's behavior, as by education, it is therefore necessary to change his phenomenal field. Education, from this point of view, is a process of increasing differentiation in the individual's phenomenal field.

However, differentiation of the field is something which can be done only by the individual himself. It cannot be done for him. As a living organism searching his field for means of self-maintenance and enhancement he differentiates only those aspects which are necessary and helpful to the achievement of his purpose. Change in his field does not have to be motivated. In fact, it cannot be prevented. It must continue as long as he is unsatisfied, that is, as long as he lives. As a living organism with a tremendous drive toward growth and self-enhancement he requires only practicable and socially acceptable opportunities for growth and development.

### CHANGE OF EMPHASIS IN EDUCATION

The task of our schools, from this point of view, is not to make people grow. By their very nature they are bound to grow and the task of the schools is only to help them to grow in socially desirable directions.

For a long time, under the influence of external psychologies, teachers have been trying to treat the student as a blank tablet, a passive receptacle for knowledge, or as a puppet purposelessly responding to whatever stimuli he happens to encounter. The phenomenological concept of the student as a real person, as an active, purposive individual with goals and motives of his own, calls for a radical redefinition of many teachers' concepts of their role. It also requires

the abandonment of many techniques which teachers have used in the past as well as the development of new ones.

An examination of the following list of phenomenological principles of learning, written for teachers, may give some idea of how different some of these new techniques will have to be.

#### THE LEARNING PROCESS<sup>5</sup>

1. "In most schoolroom situations the chief motive of the children's behavior and learning is their need for self-esteem and a feeling of personal adequacy.

2. "Activities and techniques which result in success and an increased feeling of self-esteem will be repeated; activities which result in failure, or humiliation are avoided.

3. "When children are confronted with a situation where the old techniques for satisfying their need for self-respect or security are not appropriate they will, if ready, learn new techniques for mastering the situation, and, if unready, will use or discover methods for escaping from it.

4. "Any child is ready to learn new techniques in situations which are not markedly different from situations he has already mastered. Any child is unready for situations which call for solutions quite unlike those he has already used and understood.

5. "Attempts to teach children before they are ready are not only a waste of time but, by building up attitudes of avoidance, interfere with later learning.

6. "Habit is not a cause of behavior. Acts and techniques are repeated only if they satisfy need. Habit is not the result of repetition but the result of success.

7. "Repetition is not a cause of learning. It is true that some situations, such as those calling for the development of a new motor skill or a technique of solution completely new to the child, are ordinarily not solved at the first trial. In such circumstances most children must find themselves in the problem situation many times before they can find an adequate method of dealing with it. However, repetition sought by the child because he wishes to solve the problem has a very different effect from repetition forced upon him by the teacher. If repetition is imposed by the teacher in such a manner that the child is unable to notice progress or feels that he is failing, the result is invariably the discovery of a technique of avoidance.

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from "A Tentative Social Studies Program," Campus Elementary School, Oswego State Teachers College, Oswego, N. Y. 1945 (207).

8. "Since the purpose of the schools is to develop each child to maximum capacity as a productive and happy member of society the real test of their success is not the degree to which the pupils can talk about desirable techniques or even the degree to which they are able to use them in school at the command of the teacher but the degree to which they voluntarily use them in their daily life outside of school. In other words, the attitudes which are required along with subject matter may be even more important than the subject matter itself.

9. "The learning of any skill or item of subject matter is accompanied by the formation of attitudes by the pupil toward the subject, toward school, toward his teacher, toward teachers in general, toward adults, toward society, and toward himself which may be desirable or undesirable. As a result, how subject matter is taught may be even more important than what is taught.

10. "Skills are better retained and more often used if they are learned under conditions similar to those in which they will be used.

11. "Subject matter must be presented in such a way that each child shall secure a feeling of pride and satisfaction through its mastery. This involves an awareness of individual differences among children, not only in ability but in past experiences and present personality. It involves pacing the work for the individual child and it involves a wide and varied program of experiences in school so that each child will have an opportunity to feel successful in his work.

12. "Since coöperation with others is a necessary feature of the work of all members of our society it seems desirable to provide many experiences where success can be obtained only as the result of the joint efforts of a group of specialized individuals.

13. "The ideal program would be one in which the pacing of experiences is so appropriate that no experience ever needs to be repeated. It is not likely that this ideal will ever be attained but it is fair to assume that a program which requires large amounts of repetitive work is out of step with the normal development of the children and will result in techniques of avoidance rather than mastery. If a child fails to develop the desired attitude or skill as a result of an experience it should be assumed that what is required is a different experience."

The above statement of learning principles falls far short of completeness since it only hints at the terrific drive of the individual for self-enhancement and self-realization which makes him so unresponsive to the conventional methods and techniques of teaching. But it is not inaccurate as far as it goes. It can, therefore, help us to decide what teachers can actually do to assist the education of their pupils.

## THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN EDUCATION

If we accepted the data of the external approach and thought of the learner as a passive receptacle for knowledge, we should also have to think of the teacher as an active dominating force who rearranges and manipulates the environment in such a way that learning is assured. All of the emphases in the resulting systems of education fall on the teacher and the methods he uses. It is to these that success or failure are usually attributed and very little responsibility is placed on the child, whose work is rigidly assigned and inspected by the teacher. It is taken for granted that the child is uninterested in learning and he must be tricked and coerced into it.

This is completely at variance with the conclusions to which we are led by the phenomenological approach. If all human behavior is directed toward the preservation and enhancement of the phenomenal self then it must follow that force and coercion cannot be effective means of education. Acts performed under duress diminish rather than enhance the phenomenal self and are performed only as the lesser of evils. Coercion can therefore be effective only in the immediate situation in which the requested behavior is the least humiliating choice it cannot insure that the desired acts will be performed outside of school or in later life, where the threat of force is absent. On the contrary, our attempts at coercion, by making the required act a cause of humiliation, may insure that it will not be performed thereafter. It is not, therefore, a suitable method for education.

If human beings are as dynamic and indomitable in the pursuit of their ends as we find them, it seems obvious that efforts to control their behavior in school and out can succeed only when the behavior sought is satisfactory to both teachers and pupils. Education can take place only with the active participation of the individual. Teachers who attempt to teach by methods which lower the self-esteem of their pupils cannot hope to succeed in any real sense. In such a situation their pupils will be able to learn only ways of circumventing the teachers and of avoiding the education they are trying to impose. It seems strange that so many people who fully comprehend the folly of encircling a tree with pavement and who know how small plants can

break concrete feel fully capable of thwarting the tremendous power of the same living urge in human beings. Fortunately for them, the human organism has a fluidity and flexibility in achieving its purposes that the tree or plant does not have, so that people who stand in its way are usually circumvented rather than destroyed.<sup>6</sup>

### BASIC TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING

It is not the task of the teacher to force people to learn against their will, since that is impossible. Nor is it his task to trick them into learning. The responsibility of the teacher is to help each student discover and use means of satisfying his need which are personally effective and socially desirable. As a teacher he can help do this in three ways :

1. He can help provide each child with the experiences and the physical resources which will make it possible for him to discover realistic and effective solutions to his present problems.

2. He can help provide an atmosphere of acceptance in which each student is free to explore his environment and to move toward the satisfaction of need without fear of humiliation. This should not be taken to mean that it is the responsibility of the teacher to shield the child from all failure. It does mean that he should try to maintain an atmosphere in which the child feels so adequate and acceptable that he can recognize failure and deal with it realistically and without panic. It is not necessary that the teacher must accept and approve all the child's acts. To do so would interfere with learning by keeping the child from discovering the true consequences of his behavior. It is necessary, however, that the teacher approve and accept the child and provide an atmosphere where he and his classmates can approve and accept one another.

3. The teacher can act as a friendly representative of the socially responsible adult society which the child will eventually be expected to join. As a representative of the society, he can give the child an oppor-

<sup>6</sup> There is no way of knowing how much failure to learn in school is actually the result of active resistance to over-directive and dominating adults but on the basis of our clinical observations we believe that such situations are rather frequent.



tunity to see himself realistically but acceptably from the point of view of that society.

#### WHAT SHOULD A TEACHER BE LIKE?

It is not the purpose of this book to suggest specific teaching techniques. The techniques are important but in the last analysis the techniques used by a teacher will be determined by his concept of himself, of his duties and of his students. The behavior of the teacher, like the behavior of his pupils, is determined by the phenomenal field at the instant of action. No matter how thorough his training in skills and techniques of teaching, those skills and techniques will not be used if they do not conform to his personal philosophy of life and serve his immediate ends. If the results he wishes to secure are not those which can be secured by the approved methods, the methods will be distorted or abandoned.

The teacher, it seems obvious, must be a cultured person, able adequately to represent and interpret the society in which his pupils are attempting to find places. But knowledge and skill are not enough, unless the personal goals of the teacher coincide with the purposes of society and the aspirations of his pupils. If the teacher feels so inadequate that he desires superiority and mastery over his pupils more than anything else, increased knowledge and skills will not make him a better teacher because they will be used to secure his own goal instead of the growth of the student. Unless he has an adequate phenomenal self he will be under strong pressure to seek self-enhancement at the expense of his pupils. The teachers that we need must have knowledge and skills, of course. They must have enough knowledge of human nature and of the social and physical environment to assist their individual students to discover more effective ways of solving their problems and satisfying their need. They must have skills and personal characteristics which make them accepted and respected by their students and the community. But, above all, they must have a genuine respect for the potentialities and personal worth of each student and a corresponding interest in and sympathy with his strivings for self-maintenance and self-enhancement. They must have phenomenal selves adequate enough to enable them to accept

other people, particularly their students, as they are without any loss of self-esteem and without any undue desire to dominate them or to withdraw from contact with students of low prestige value. In other words, the effective teacher must be not a storehouse of knowledge nor a master technician, but a kind of person; a happy, intelligent, adequate personality.

Unfortunately, there are not many people who can satisfy these requirements. Those who do are leaders and are in strong demand in other occupations, some of which pay higher salaries and command more social prestige than teaching. Our teacher training institutions have been quite effective in developing skills and techniques among their students and many of the colleges are using screening procedures to eliminate candidates who lack the personal qualities desirable in a teacher. However, 90,000 new teachers are needed each year in the United States and it is not likely that so many teachers with desirable personalities can be secured from the comparatively small number of applicants by this process of elimination. It is to be hoped that the teachers colleges will undertake, before too long, a more positive program which would devote as much attention to the personal development of the prospective teacher as is now devoted to teaching him subject matter and skills.

## ✂ CHAPTER XII ✂

### *Diagnosis and Research in a Phenomenological System*

IN a very real sense, the diagnosis of individual behavior represents the keystone of approach to the solution of the problems of both theoretical and applied psychology. Without a knowledge of the fundamental motivations of the individual, we can make but little progress toward the solution of these problems. What is more, since these motivations of behavior are personal and unique to the particular individual under observation, we must find means of arriving at a description and evaluation of how they operate in individual cases. When we have succeeded in understanding individuals, it should be comparatively easy to understand groups as well, and with greater accuracy of prediction than has previously been possible for us.

From a phenomenological point of view diagnosis is the observer's attempt to explore and define an individual's phenomenal field. This exploration and definition, in turn, makes possible the prediction of behavior. Thus, the techniques we devise for the diagnosis of behavior will also be the research devices by which we hope to explore behavior in a phenomenological system. But diagnosis is not only useful from the research point of view. Accurate diagnosis is likely to represent for the applied worker the very source of his livelihood. No matter where he is working, whether in industry, in education, in clinical work or, for that matter, in any branch of human endeavor, the success or failure of the applied worker's ability to predict behavior of others is likely to represent in the long run the most important single factor in his success or failure as a professional worker.

The aim of diagnosis in any frame of reference is always the same; namely, to arrive at a more or less clear understanding of the individual under observation. However, the approaches one takes to reach this goal may vary greatly, depending upon the frame of reference one

adopts. In the external approach, the objective facts about the individual and his environment are of primary importance. The facts which lead to understanding are conceived to be outside the subject and are only admissible as evidence if they are directly observable. The phenomenological approach, on the other hand, goes beyond this point to seek its facts in the *meaning* with which the individual invests the externally observed situation. In other words, phenomenological diagnosis does not deny the facts of external observation, it stresses the meanings of the externally observed facts for the individual himself.

For phenomenological diagnosis and research we shall probably discover that many techniques of external psychology will be useful for our purposes. Many others will prove to be unsuitable or inefficient for our problem. It will even be necessary at times to break sharply with established practices and to devise new techniques more useful for phenomenological purposes. That such a break may at times become necessary should not disturb us unduly, however, for this is characteristic of new frames of reference. New frames of reference require new techniques of study. This has been true throughout the history of science. In astronomy the shift from a geocentric to a heliocentric universe required many new techniques. The same was true in physics in the shift from Aristotelian to a Galilean approach, in biology with an evolutionary concept of man and is forcibly brought home to us today in political science as we struggle to find new techniques to deal with world problems made necessary by the development of the atomic bomb. The methods of one frame of reference, furthermore, cannot always meet the criteria of admissibility in another. This makes them no less useful in their own frame of reference nor does it make them any the less scientific. As Lecky (197) has so ably pointed out, the goal of science is not the satisfaction of a particular scientific method; rather, whatever methods make control and prediction possible are scientific.

#### THE PROBLEM OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS AND RESEARCH

We have postulated in our phenomenological system that all behavior is a function of the phenomenal field. We have described this

field, furthermore, as a complex organization of the unique and personal meanings existing for the individual. It follows that the problem of phenomenological diagnosis and research must be: *the exploration of the nature of the phenomenal field and of the differentiations which are characteristic of the field*. This means that diagnosis must serve to give us a more or less complete and accurate picture of the individual's complex, personal organization of meanings.

#### EXPLORATION OF THE TOTAL FIELD

Since it is a complex and unique organization we wish to explore, one of the problems with which we shall be faced at the outset is how to explore this organization without destroying it in the process. An organization, after all, is a whole. When its parts are abstracted there is grave danger that wholeness may be destroyed in the process.<sup>1</sup> What has happened in common practice with the use of the Thematic Apperception Test, illustrates this point extremely well. In spite of the fact that several methods of analysis for this test have been proposed and utilized for purposes of research, every clinician known to these authors, who use this instrument with individual clients in clinical diagnosis, discards the published analysis methods in favor of less restricted types of description. All feel that the attempt to reduce Thematic Apperception interpretations to categories which make statistical treatment possible results in destroying the very dynamic organization the test is so useful in revealing. It seems likely that for a very considerable time to come we shall be unable to express total organizations in mathematical terms.

The problem posed to mathematics by field theory is indeed gigantic. As Dr. Harold Edgerton<sup>2</sup> has expressed it the problem requires the "definition of a particular locus in  $n$ -dimensional hyperspace." It does not seem likely that mathematics will solve this problem in our lifetime. The fact that new ideas may not be interpreted in mathematical terms does not mean that such ideas are unscientific. Indeed, this state of affairs is even to be expected for, since mathematics represents a language by which ideas may be described and manipulated, it must usually follow ideas. In discussing this problem, Cannon (31, pp.

<sup>1</sup> This is what the individual himself does by introspection.

<sup>2</sup> Unpublished statement to authors.

35, 36) states: "This does not mean that, at present, biological phenomena in general can be subjected to mathematical manipulation. Some of these phenomena involve a complexity which makes impossible such interpretation as the physicist, for instance, applies to his problems. . . . The eminent physical chemist, G. N. Lewis, has declared 'I have no patience with attempts to identify science with measurement, which is but one of its tools, or with any definition of a scientist that would exclude a Darwin, a Pasteur, or a Kekule.'"

Since the total field is made up of the individual's meanings of events past, present, and future, it may appear that the problem of phenomenological diagnosis and research is a completely hopeless task. Indeed it would be, if it were necessary for us to know and understand all the meanings of events for the individual in course of his entire life history. Actually, the picture is by no means so bleak for, even without understanding the entire life history of an individual, many psychologists are making accurate predictions in their daily work.

#### EXPLORATION OF DIFFERENTIATION WITHIN THE PHENOMENAL FIELD

While the exploration of the individual's total field in detail seems almost impossible, the differentiations of certain aspects of the phenomenal field are distinctly within the range of investigation. It will be recalled from our previous discussion, that while the behavior of the individual is always a result of the total organization of the phenomenal field, certain differentiations of the field become so important in the motivation of behavior as to serve as effective guides to what the individual will or will not do in any circumstance. These differentiations are the phenomenal self, the meanings of specific aspects of objective reality, and the individual's goals and techniques. These four loom so large in the motivation of behavior as to make it possible for the psychologist to predict behavior with great accuracy once he has gained understanding of their character and operation in the individual's total field of meaning. It is these four major types of differentiation within the field with which phenomenological diagnosis and research must be concerned. But how may these be studied?

Since behavior is a function of the phenomenal field and since the

field is composed of the meaning of events for the individual, phenomenological diagnosis will be concerned with events and with the meanings of these events. In other words, our study will be directed toward establishing (1) the objective facts, that is, the facts as they are agreed upon by external observers, and (2) the meaning of those facts for the subject. We might call these the objective facts and the phenomenological facts.

### OBJECTIVE FACTS IN PHENOMENOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS AND RESEARCH

#### THE USE OF OBJECTIVE FACTS

We are concerned in a phenomenological approach with the individual's meanings but these are always meanings of something. Thus, we shall need to know the objective facts<sup>3</sup> from which such meanings are derived. This will be particularly true in the study of persons under threat where meanings may be at considerable variance from the observed facts. It is, in part, through such external observations that it will be possible for us to make our inferences as to the nature of the individual's phenomenal field. For the most part our inferences will be of the "Now why did he do that?" "Under what circumstances would a person have done that?" or "What meaning would one have to have about this or that event to make one act like that?" character. To make such inferences it will be necessary to use objective, external observations of behavior as the basis for our interpretations.

#### THE SELECTION OF OBJECTIVE FACTS

In selecting objective facts for phenomenological diagnosis and research, we shall be guided by different criteria than are generally true in external approaches to this problem. Many of the facts ordinarily thought to be essential in the external frame of reference will not be necessary for our purposes. For phenomenological diagnosis and research, we shall be concerned with those facts which directly

<sup>3</sup> From a phenomenological point of view "objective" facts are derived from the phenomenal fields of several observers. The objective facts in a particular culture or subculture thus represent the least common denominator of the phenomenal fields of a number of observers.

impinge on our subject and to which he is formulating meanings. In the case of a rejected child, for example, we will want to include those aspects of his situation which seem important to the child or which make possible our understanding of how he came to feel rejected. The occupation of his maternal grandfather, the date of his first attendance at school and similar factual material ordinarily included in a standard case history will be of little use to us in most cases, although it is conceivable that any information in a specific case *might* have significant meaning. In short, we shall have use for those facts which are pertinent to the production of meanings in our subject's unique field.

In addition to those facts that have meaning for the individual at present, we shall want to include those facts which do not have meaning for him now but which may conceivably have meaning for him in the future. This will be particularly true in diagnosis for treatment purposes. Some facts may have no meaning for the individual at the moment but may be essential to us in order to project future meanings of situations and thus predict behavior. For instance, if Jimmy is now in third grade and we are considering the possibility of dropping him back a grade as a treatment measure, we may be vitally concerned with knowing the facts of the second grade in some detail, although at the moment they may be of no concern and have little meaning for Jimmy.

Whatever facts we select for purposes of diagnosis or research will always be with reference to the meanings they have for our client. But how shall we know what facts to choose? Two choices are open to us. We can attempt to include in our study of an individual all facts which might conceivably have meaning for him, or we can be guided by the subject himself with respect to what facts we shall consider. In the first case, we shall have to devise a method of securing facts which will encompass practically all of the individual's life experience. This is essentially what many social work case studies attempt. Aside from the fact that the task presented by this choice is almost impossible for most studies, the practice is extremely wasteful and inefficient from a practical standpoint, for it requires the accumulation of a tremendous amount of data, only a small part of which may be useful in the study of a client's meanings.



A more efficient as well as a more direct approach to the problem is to permit ourselves to be guided by the subject himself in selecting the significant facts. After all, it is his meanings we seek to discover. We are almost forced to follow his directions. At first glance this will appear to be a most haphazard procedure, likely to result in extreme error. On the contrary, it is likely to be extremely accurate and workable for our purposes. Since the client's behavior is a function of his meanings, wherever he guides us will have meaning for him, even though it does not appear so to him or to us at first glance. What is more, since his behavior is driven by need, those aspects which are problems to him or frustrate need will motivate his behavior more strongly and thus be more likely of revelation to the observer. This, of course, presupposes that the observer recognizes the subject's integrity and is guided by a real willingness to help and does not threaten his client. Unless these aspects are present, information derived in any manner from the client will be subject to error.

To attempt to restrict the client to the meanings important to the observer immediately introduces into the observations a very high degree of error and the observer's study of his client may degenerate to a projective situation in which he interprets the facts about the latter in terms of his own needs. This leads to the absurd situation where the observer sets out to study his client and ends by studying himself! To accomplish the study of a client, such as we are seeking in a phenomenological frame of reference, will require that the observer be extremely well controlled in so far as his own prejudices are concerned.

#### THE TYPES OF OBJECTIVE FACTS FOR INCLUSION

For phenomenological diagnosis and research two general classes of objective facts will concern us: those descriptive of the individual's environment and those about the subject himself. The environmental facts will make possible certain inferences with respect to many of the subject's differentiations which will be crucial in our study. They will also serve to limit the field of possible meanings which may exist for the subject. For instance, knowing the particular culture or subcultures in which an individual developed will often make it possible for

us to make certain inferences as to probable meanings which exist for him as a member of those groups. In the same way, such knowledge will make it possible for us to exclude some inferences as unlikely in those environmental conditions.

The objective facts about the individual himself will help us to make certain inferences, particularly in respect to the way in which he regards himself and the physical limits of his phenomenal self. Such facts will be particularly important in treatment planning. The facts about the client's abilities, stature, color and the like may assist us both in understanding present events and in forecasting his behavior in future situations.

#### TECHNIQUES OF OBTAINING OBJECTIVE FACTS

Since the collection of objective facts has for so long been conceived as the primary task of psychology, the techniques for obtaining them are extremely numerous and, for the most part, so well known that we shall not pause at this point to do more than attempt to classify them. In general, they fall in three broad types: the observer's observations, the observations of others than the observer or the subject, and various forms of controlled observations.

In the first of these classes, the psychologist makes observations directly with respect to the individual and his environment. He attempts to describe these two aspects in as nearly exact terms as possible. For example, the clinician working with a particular child may visit the child's schoolroom to observe his behavior in that setting, or he may visit the child's home with an eye to observing the home conditions which surround him, or he may make more or less informal observations in his own office, clinic or laboratory. In any event, he is seeking to establish the nature of the objective facts by means of his own personal observations.

In the case of observations made by others, the psychologist accepts the report of other witnesses whom he regards as reliable. Thus, he may ask for reports from teachers, employers, friends and acquaintances of his subject. Frequently these reports may also be obtained from court records, school reports, and various forms of documentary

material. In many cases these may be subjected to certain tests of reliability and validity.

The third group includes a tremendous number of special devices constructed for the purpose of making controlled observations. These constitute the traditional and most acceptable observations in the external frame of reference. The techniques used vary widely from attempts to control observations in life situations by such means as taking time samples, successive observations, the use of laboratory experimentation, to various forms of traditional psychological tests. All are based on the same principle of attempting to obtain accuracy and regularity through the restriction and control of observation to the point where agreement in observation (reliability) is possible. For the most part these are oriented toward establishing the relationship of the individual to the "normal" group. The number of these instruments now in use is so large that it would be impossible for us to do justice to them here. Instead of attempting such a discussion we shall push on to examine the nature of more strictly phenomenological data.

#### THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL FACTS IN DIAGNOSIS AND RESEARCH

The phenomenological facts in diagnosis and research are the meanings of events as they appear to the subject or client. It is these meanings which comprise the phenomenal field and which result in the behavior we observe and seek to understand. In particular, diagnosis will be concerned with discovering the nature of the following important differentiations:

1. The meanings of certain external events for the client.
2. The definition of the phenomenal self and self-concept.
3. The goals differentiated by the individual to satisfy his need.
4. The characteristic techniques by which he attempts to reach his goals.

To determine these meanings it will be necessary for us to go beyond the observable facts to infer the nature of such differentiations in the individual's own personal organization. To do this the psycholo-

gist will have to be much more than a mechanist, concerned with the manipulation of external factors of environment. He must be able to see the world as others see it and able to put himself in his client's place. He will be required to utilize his imagination and creative abilities to the utmost of his capacities while at the same time practicing upon himself the most rigid personal discipline with respect to his own prejudices and meanings.

At least five techniques of investigation into the individual's personal meanings are already in more or less widely accepted use or show promise of possible development for that purpose. These are: (1) Information obtained from the individual himself; (2) Inferences from observed behavior; (3) The use of projective techniques; (4) The protocols of therapy and (5) The case history. While we shall separate these for purposes of our discussion, it will be recognized that they are by no means discrete classifications and overlap considerably.

#### INFORMATION FROM THE INDIVIDUAL HIMSELF

##### THE SUBJECT'S OWN WORD

Since we are concerned with the individual's own meanings, nothing would appear to be more natural than that we should ask him what his meanings are. Psychologists will recognize this as the introspective method given up by psychology a good many years ago as an inaccurate source of information. From a phenomenological point of view, too, it presents a number of difficulties, since what the client has to say about himself is always subject to more or less distortion. What is more, the individual is often not aware of the true nature of his field and even if he were, the instant he turns attention to his field it is different from what it was an instant before.

In spite of these difficulties, however, it is possible for us to use the subject's own descriptions of events, providing we turn our attention to the meanings of these events for him rather than upon what he is saying alone. We have postulated that all behavior is a function of the meanings that exist for the individual, including what he has to say about himself. If this is true, it should be possible for us to

reverse this process and infer from his behavior the nature of the meanings which lie behind them. These meanings, for the most part, will be expressed in what the layman calls "feelings." It will be recalled from our previous discussion that these feelings are the individual's attempts to describe his field state at any moment. Thus, by attending to the feelings which the individual is expressing, we may arrive at a more or less accurate description of the meanings which exist for him. This will be possible even when the words he uses in describing himself or the events around him are intentionally distorted by him to give another impression. For instance, when a mother brings her seven-year-old to the psychological clinic with the statement, "My son is failing first grade. How can I ever face my friends?" it is not difficult to infer the meanings that exist in the mother's field or to decide whose self-esteem is wounded in the child's failure. Frequently, such simple expressions on the part of the client may be more revealing of personal meanings than any number of more exact techniques of observation.

#### WAYS OF OBTAINING THE SUBJECT'S OWN REPORT

Techniques of obtaining the subject's own report will vary greatly both in the degree of structure they involve and the degree to which they are revealing of the client's personal meanings. They will vary in structure from extremely unrestricted, casual conversations to highly restricted and exact responses like those on many tests or questionnaires. They will vary also in degree of revelation, depending upon the client's need to protect himself in a particular situation.

*Informal Conversation About Self.* Such conversations may often be highly revealing of the person's own meanings, particularly if he does not feel threatened by the circumstances in which he finds himself, or if he becomes so involved in a conversation that he loses sight of the potential threats which exist. It is a common observation that "bull sessions" and conversations with fellow passengers on trains and busses may often give the individual a sufficient feeling of protection from threat that he is able to speak quite openly of even his deepest feelings. Sometimes, too, this occurs when a subject is extremely upset or angry, and when his field has become sufficiently

narrowed so that he does not perceive the threat which exists in the larger field. Under the effects of alcohol a similar effect may be noted. In this case, the absence of threat appears to be due to the blurring of the field rather than to an extreme narrowing, but results in the same failure of the individual to perceive the threat involved in revealing his meanings. Certain drugs like sodium pentathol and sodium amytol also appear to depend for their effectiveness on this principle.

The practiced clinician soon learns to be on the alert for such expressions of meaning as they reveal themselves in the course of conversation. He learns to be particularly alert to such aspects of the person's behavior as varying tones and inflections of speaking, unusual modes of expression and the degree of certainty or conviction with which the individual makes his statements. With experience, he learns that most people do not seriously call themselves "the black sheep of my family" or express themselves vehemently about other people without real and often highly revealing meanings for them.

*Diaries and Letters.* These forms of personal documents have often been used in literature and in sociology but have only recently been of much concern to psychologists in the study of personality dynamics. Nevertheless, such materials in which the individual "talks to himself" are often extremely useful for purposes of getting at the meanings which motivate behavior. Also, they may be much more expressive than what the client has to say of himself in conversation, since in his diary or in his letters he is writing to himself or to others whom he feels he can trust. Under these circumstances he may feel protected from threat and can express his meanings with a great deal of freedom.<sup>4</sup>

In the following excerpts from an adolescent's diary note how meanings are expressed which would be most difficult to approach in a face to face conversation.

After six weeks of daily entries each saying "No job yet," "Still no job!" and the like, is this revealing entry "I wish I could get a job!! What must Dad and Mother think? Here Sis has a job and I haven't!!"

"I felt disgusted with the whole world today."

<sup>4</sup> For a further discussion of these personal documents and many others, the interested reader is referred to Allport's (5) excellent monograph on *The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science*.

"The sooner I get out of this town the better I'll like it. It was all right for a while—but now! Gosh! It'll be great when I get to college and on my own hook."

"Took Sally home from the library. She's not mad at me!! Gosh, it's great to love a girl like her!!"

"The three of us were not going to speak to any girls today! We all failed!"

"Mac got kicked out of the basketball game so I went with him. We resolved to always stick together."

*The Use of Autobiography.* Like diaries and letters, autobiography has not been extensively used in psychological research because of the common objections to the introspective method. However, since phenomenological research is not primarily concerned with the accuracy or inaccuracy of external evaluation but in the meanings of events to the individual, the very inaccuracies of autobiography may often become important facts for our understanding of the individual. This is particularly true in clinical psychology where the concern is with the individual's differentiations of the phenomenal self and its relationship to objective reality. The clinician does not say, "This is not true to the facts as I have observed them and is therefore inaccurate." Rather, he says, "This is not true in terms of the objective facts but is the way my client sees them and *that is important.*" *It is even possible that it may be the very inaccuracy of report that gives the clinician his most important clues to personality.*

As Allport (5) has pointed out, the use of autobiography in psychological research may vary widely from highly uncontrolled materials on the one hand to such highly controlled essays on the other as to resemble a questionnaire. Regardless of the type of autobiography employed, however, such devices serve to give us most important clues into the fundamental meanings which make up the individual's phenomenal field. Such insights into personal meanings as are revealed in the following small excerpt from an autobiography are too valuable a source of information to be overlooked in our search for diagnostic devices.

When I was ten years old my father died very suddenly. As far as we knew he was all right, till one night he had indigestion, went to the kitchen for some soda, and fell over. He lived for about twelve more hours

under an oxygen tent, and then died. It was a heart attack. So one minute I had a father and next thing I didn't have one. It was so sudden and unexpected that I couldn't believe it. It left me with a very insecure feeling, as though there wasn't anything stable that I could depend on. Things just happened from day to day and were sort of superficial as far as I was concerned after that. Then my mother's attitude and being away all day running my father's store after he died emphasized this feeling even more. My mother was adjusting to the shock by constant activity. So my mother's constant running around and doing things gave me still less to hold on to.

We cannot afford, in attacking the problems of our science, to overlook so important a technique for observation. Allport, for instance, after discussing many of these devices in some detail, has concluded that "The evidence in hand justifies our plea for the use and refinement of these common-sense modes of mental operation which are characteristically concerned with the behavior of the single case in all its patterned complexity. Unless these tools are admitted to the equipment of the social disciplines it is difficult to see how these disciplines can in the future outstrip naked common sense" (5).

#### THE USE OF TESTS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

A great many tests in current use have important values for phenomenological research. This is particularly true of some of the better personality inventories which may often be highly revealing of individual meanings. Indeed, one may observe in the history of these devices a trend toward greater and greater use of phenomenological items. In the early days of personality tests a great many questions were preceded by such phrases as "Do you ever . . . ?" "Is it hard to . . . ?" "Can you be . . . ?" "Have you been . . . ?" "Do you enjoy . . . ?" and "Would you . . . ?" in which the accent was placed upon what the subject did. In recent years, however, the trend in such items has been toward asking the individual to indicate his feelings, his attitudes and thoughts through such phrases as "I think . . . ," "I feel . . . ," "I like . . ." and "I wish . . . ."<sup>5</sup> In some tests this phenomenological emphasis has even invaded the statistical

<sup>5</sup> The California Test of Personality and the Minnesota Multiphasic, for example.



scores of the tests. For instance, the California Test of Personality scores the individual in such terms as "Feelings of Personal Worth," "Self Reliance," and "Feelings of Personal Freedom."

For purposes of phenomenological research and diagnosis, however, normative scores will have little to offer in examining the personal meanings of events for the client. For the most part, the individual items of the inventory are likely to prove of greater value for our purpose. For example, note how much more revealing are the following excerpts from a child's marking of a part of the California Test of Personality than simply a percentile score would give him:

Are your folks right when they make you mind? NO  
 Do you wish you could live in some other home? YES  
 Do most of your friends and classmates think you are bright? YES  
 Do your folks seem to think that you are doing well? NO  
 Have people often been so unfair that you gave up? No  
 Are people often so unkind or unfair that it makes you feel bad? YES  
 Do children think you can do things well? NO  
 Are you punished for many things you do? Yes<sup>6</sup>

Another valuable use of common tests for phenomenological purposes is in helping the examiner to a more accurate evaluation of the degree of differentiation which the individual has made with respect to a particular field of endeavor. Most of our intelligence tests are, in reality, no more than tests of the differentiations characteristic of the subject. The trend in modern clinical use of such standard intelligence tests as the Stanford-Binet, for example, is to emphasize more and more the study of test items while laying less and less emphasis upon total scores. In fact, the real measure of a good psychometrician these days lies in the degree to which the worker can make interpretations from the differentiations he observes in the item analysis of the test. In attempting to determine something of the nature of the subject's differentiations a great many informally constructed tests also have value in diagnosis. Because these are not standardized does not make them any the less useful to the clinician

<sup>6</sup> Printed by permission of the California Test Bureau, Los Angeles 28, California.

in making spot determinations of the extent of his subject's discriminations.<sup>7</sup>

Many of the commonly used questionnaires and interest inventories may also prove highly useful in exploring the individual's phenomenal field. Like the use of other tests, in most cases the items of the inventories will be found to be more useful for phenomenological purposes than the normative scores they produce. Statements by the subject that he would rather be a plumber than an actor, or a pharmacist than a teacher may render us much more important insights than a percentile score indicating a "tendency toward" some large field of work.

Even closer to the needs of phenomenological research are such tests as the Mooney Problems Check Lists and others of its type which have appeared on the market in the past few years. Such tests ask the subject to indicate in a large number of problems, attitudes, ideas, or the like those which he feels are of greatest concern to him. In this way a fairly direct approach is made to exploring the personal meanings that exist for the individual. Many of our modern attitude tests have similar important cues to offer for the construction of research devices for phenomenological purposes.

#### INFERENCES FROM OBSERVED BEHAVIOR

A second important source of phenomenological data lies in the inferences it may be possible for us to make from the behavior we observe. This is a technique all of us use in daily life. We are constantly forced to make such inferences from the behavior we observe about us. If we did not, we would be likely to find ourselves in extremely embarrassing situations. When our hostess begins to be uneasy and finds it difficult to stifle a yawn, for instance, we must know that it is time to go home. In the same way, we are constantly modifying our behavior as we make judgments of what others like or dislike, as we infer what the car driver is going to do when we cross the street, and as we build our sales appeal on what we think our customers want. Since all behavior is determined by the phenomenal

<sup>7</sup>See Wells (214), *Mental Examiner's Handbook* for numerous examples of these types of tests in common use.

field, it should be possible for us to reverse this process and infer the nature of the field from the behavior we observe. As we have said before, the layman does it and the psychologist presumably should be able to do it better.

As was true in our use of the subject's own statements about himself, our observations of his behavior will stress inferences as to the meaning of his behavior for him rather than the behavior itself. For the most part, these will take the character of such questions as "How would one have to feel to act like that?" "Under what circumstances would I have responded like that?" or "What was he trying to do?" A number of techniques will be available to us in making such observations.

#### UNCONTROLLED BEHAVIOR SITUATIONS

A great many opportunities are available for making observations in uncontrolled situations. With children, for example, we may make observations in nursery school, in free play on the playground, or similar situations. With adults we may make observations at dinner, on the streetcar, or in any of a thousand other activities not under direct control of the observer. From such observations, if we are alive to the meanings which produce the behavior we observe, a great deal of insight may be gained into the nature of the individual's field.

#### THE USE OF CONTROLLED OBSERVATIONS

For the experimental psychologist, however, it is likely that more controlled observations may often be desirable. A great deal of the already published research in this area may be found to be highly profitable when observed from a phenomenological viewpoint. For example, a great many of the experiments conducted on the level of aspiration are distinctly pertinent to the problems of phenomenological research and diagnosis. The same would be true of the interesting experiments in child behavior carried on by Lewin and his students. Observations of children made under such controlled conditions are often revealing of important dynamic aspects of behavior. For instance, the work of Barker, Dembo and Lewin (14) who

experimented with children's reactions to interposing a barrier between the child and an assortment of beautiful playthings, made possible inferences as to the meanings of such barriers to the child, as well as observations of the nature of his behavior when presented with such an obstacle.

A great many of the techniques already developed for the investigation of experimental neurosis also have bearing upon certain aspects of phenomenological research. Krasnogorski's (102) work with children, for example, has much to offer in suggesting a methodology for approaching this important problem in clinical psychology. Certainly, work in hypnosis has an important bearing upon the exploration of the phenomenal field. It seems possible that Hartshorne and May's (81) techniques in the study of deceit might be made to produce much important information if interpreted in terms of the meanings existing for the child rather than direct observation of his behavior.

#### EXPRESSIVE MOVEMENT

If our fundamental hypothesis that all behavior is a function of the phenomenal field is correct, then all movements of the individual should be revealing of such meanings if we could but discover the means of interpreting them. This includes such expressive movements as writing, characteristic body gestures, or any other activity of the individual in the course of his daily life. We cannot afford to discard such observations from our science because they smack of the mystical. Rather, it is necessary for us to examine these matters with care in an attempt to discover more exact and satisfactory ways of interpreting them. It seems likely that we shall have greater success in these endeavors if we attempt to make such interpretations in terms of the whole pattern presented by such movements, rather than attempting to break them down into smaller patterns which may destroy the more important aspects for which we are searching.

#### THE USE OF CONVERSATION REGARDING OTHERS

Even the subject's conversation about other people has vast possibilities for us as a device to approach the meanings of events for

the individual. It is common observation that we respond to the behavior of others in terms of our own needs and meanings. Thus, even the most impartial of Republican or Democratic newspapers cannot avoid a bias in their reporting, nor is the individual likely to be deeply concerned about behavior of others unless that concern is in some fashion meaningful to himself. Actually, an individual's conversation about other people is likely to be a very potent projection of his own attitudes and feelings if the observer is sufficiently keen to be aware of their deeper meanings.

#### INTERPRETATIONS FROM PROJECTIVE DEVICES

Since the individual's behavior is a function of his phenomenal field, whatever behavior he shows must be the result of those meanings which make up the phenomenal field. What is more, since behavior is motivated by need, the greater the individual's need the more his behavior is likely to express that need. If we supply the person with a situation in which he is free to respond as he pleases, presumably he will invest the situation we provide with his own personal meanings. The stronger his need, the stronger should these meanings be expressed. This is the fundamental principle of projective techniques.

Projective techniques have another aspect which further increases the likelihood of such meanings being revealed. This is the fact that most projective devices are more or less consciously designed to give the individual a feeling of protection in his responses which remove him from the threat involved in revealing such meanings in ordinary life situations. By making the projective instrument a story, a play, or something of the kind, the subject is given a feeling of protection in that he can always pass off his responses as being "just a story" or a fantasy which "no one could possibly imagine had anything to do with himself." Such meaningful material is the very lifeblood of phenomenological research. A vast literature has already been accumulated on the development and use of projective instruments of several hundred types and varieties. These range from the almost completely unstructured "Cloud Pictures" of Stern (203) on the one

hand, to the very highly structured and controlled projections in highly directive play diagnosis on the other. As Rapaport (155) has pointed out, there is a common tendency of late to restrict improperly the terms "projective" to a comparatively small group of such techniques. Actually, story writing, autobiography, music interpretation, diaries, letters, and a great many other forms of personal documents are as much projective devices as the more formalized Rorschach, Thematic Apperception Test, Psychodrama, or use of puppets for revealing aspects of personality. We shall not be able to discuss all of these devices in this chapter, by any means, but we can give some thought to a few representative samples of the group in terms of their usefulness for phenomenological research and diagnosis.

#### THE RORSCHACH INK-BLOTS

Undoubtedly the best known and most widely used of the projective devices is the Rorschach Ink-blot. Although more work has been done with this fascinating instrument than with any other single projective instrument, from a strictly phenomenological point of view the net effect of this work has been to reduce its effectiveness for our purposes. In the earliest clinical use of ink-blot, investigators were struck by the meaningful character of the responses elicited from persons who described what they saw in these highly unstructured materials. Like all other projective instruments, however, the kinds of responses made by subjects to the ink-blot did not lend themselves readily to objective or statistical treatment. Accordingly, Rorschach attempted to standardize the ink-blot plates and suggested certain techniques of objectification for their use. To accomplish this objectification, in his *Psychodiagnostik* (168), he shifted very largely from a consideration of the content of ink-blot responses to an emphasis upon the formal aspects of the subject's concept formations. In effect, this was a turning away from the *meaning* projected into the subject in favor of external observation of his behavior by concentrating on the subject's *method* of handling the material. Thus, the emphasis was changed from phenomenological description to a trait description of individuals. This shift of emphasis made for a larger degree of

objectification of the materials and made possible the counting of responses and their statistical treatment.<sup>8</sup>

The modern use of the Rorschach in external diagnosis has often proved to be extremely valuable. For phenomenological diagnosis, however, we shall probably find it more profitable to make our inferences directly from the protocols of the subject's responses rather than screening these through the various scoring systems which have been devised for the test. Essentially, this is a reversion to the original uses of the ink-blot. As the subject responds to the highly unstructured ink-blot plates, he engages in a kind of projective interview which can be highly revealing for our purposes. The typical Rorschach interview often provides a veritable gold mine of data relative to the client's perceptions and will often make it possible for us to infer a great deal about the nature of his phenomenal field. Thus from a single administration of the Rorschach, we may take our choice of either objective or phenomenological diagnosis, or, if we choose, we may use both.

The problem of the objectification of projective instruments is an extremely knotty question. Whenever it is attempted, techniques drop from a dynamic level of causation to a more sterile level of descriptive measurement. This is exactly what has occurred with the Rorschach. Its greatest value today lies in its frequently extraordinary ability to describe and classify its subjects. In this sense, Rorschach has made a most significant contribution to external psychology, but the test offers little in its present form to a phenomenological system.

<sup>8</sup> As a result of such an emphasis, modern scoring categories for the Rorschach are concerned with such matters as: (1) "location of responses," including such differentiations as responses to wholes or parts of the ink-blot, responses to details, reversals of figure and ground, and the like; (2) "determinants," which include such aspects of movement, shading, color, and form; and (3) "content" aspects of response, including such factors as human, animal, nature, art, and popular responses. While such categories make possible greater agreement that a particular factor does or does not occur, they also serve to obscure the very meanings of events for the subject which we seek to capture by the use of projective devices. Probably no one would deny that seeing movement, shading, detail, and similar aspects are expressions of the individual's personality. However, it seems unfortunate to restrict observations with such rich materials to so narrow a field of observation. Although, by such a procedure we gain in objectivity, we lose much more in meaning.

Phenomenological diagnosis must go beyond description. It is not enough to know that Mr. Brown is a neurotic, shows signs of schizophrenia, or organic pathology. We must know why these facts are true, what their meaning is in terms of our client, and the relationships existing between these meanings and the total organization of which they are a part. For diagnosis to be used in treatment planning, nothing less is acceptable as our goal. It seems likely that a return to a more direct interpretation from the ink-bLOTS might make this technique more useful for our purposes.

#### THE THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST

From a strictly phenomenological point of view, a more valuable tool for phenomenological diagnosis is the Thematic Apperception Test. This instrument offers several unique advantages over less structured projective devices and remains closer to a phenomenological frame of reference. In the first place, the Thematic Apperception Test provides stimulus material consisting of pictures which, for the most part, are vague representations of social situations. This has certain points of superiority over the more unstructured type. Stern's (203) "Cloud Pictures," for instance, have been nowhere nearly so effective in eliciting the dynamics of personal reference. We have seen that the individual's behavior is dependent upon the meaning of events in the phenomenal field. Since all of us live in a society, and since our adjustment or lack of it is to the social situation in which we operate, the particular meanings social situations have for us, almost overwhelmingly, constitute the source of our problems. There seems real merit, therefore, in the use of social situations for eliciting fantasy material from which we can discover the individual's private meanings. What is more, the use of such material in the investigation of personality seems to simplify and facilitate projection on the part of the subject. As Symonds (206) has discovered, projections produced by the subject appear more meaningful when there is present in the stimulus material some character with which he can readily identify himself.

A second outstanding advantage in the use of the Thematic Apperception Test arises out of this very use of social situation pictures.



Both Murray (136) and Combs (37, 39) have reported that their subjects very often utilized actual experiences from their own life situations in their story plots. While we have no method, at present, to determine either the extent or the frequency of such use of life situations in story responses, the combination of T. A. T. results with such a device as autobiography may often serve to reveal those parts which are reports of direct personal experience (35). Such close approximation of projections with life experience are a great aid to interpretation and serve to make them more likely of validity than is true in less structured instruments where it is necessary to make two interpretations from material; first, as to the quality represented and then as to its meaning for the individual.<sup>9</sup>

That the Thematic Apperception Test is remarkably effective for dynamic diagnosis seems no longer in doubt. Its usefulness in clinical work has been demonstrated repeatedly (139, 128, 79, 80, 176, 173). Nevertheless, in its use for our purposes it is necessary to point out a number of serious problems in interpretation. One of these is posed by the fact that the Thematic Apperception Test asks its subject for "as dramatic a story" as he can produce. Since it is often presented as a test of imagination, the client is likely to take the clinician at his word and let his fancy roam freely and exaggeratedly in his story plots. As a result, the stories he writes are often unrestrained, bizarre and even violent in the emotions represented. Since the client is protected by the very projection the test attempts to elicit and is encouraged in his fantasies; this is a perfectly natural consequence and introduces an important factor of error. It requires that the interpreter be extremely wary of equating the strength of feeling expressed in the story plots directly to the strength of the need existing in the client's phenomenal field.

A number of scoring methods have been suggested for the Thematic Apperception Test, but none of these seems satisfactory from the phenomenological frame of reference; for, all of them, to date, destroy the very dynamic aspects of the client's fantasies the test is

<sup>9</sup>In the Rorschach, for instance, the interpretation must first be from the protocol to decide that such a quality as expansiveness is present. This interpretation must then be interpreted again in terms of the meaning of expansiveness to the personality. Such double interpretations increase the danger of error.

most useful in revealing. In addition, most of those suggested are designed from a more or less restricted frame of reference. For example, interpretations made from a psychoanalytic frame of reference are extremely likely to result in interpretations restricted to the motivational forces characteristic of that school of thought. This is likely to result in interpretations much more limited than is true of the phenomenological approach represented in this volume. If one observes behavior as being primarily motivated by a sex drive, for example, interpretations may be made in those terms and other goals overlooked in the process. From the phenomenological point of view, in which all behavior is seen as an attempt to maintain and enhance the phenomenal self, all manner of channels through which this end may be achieved are given consideration. Interpretations are free to include not only the satisfaction of need though sexual behavior, but through gainful employment, satisfaction in achievement, and innumerable other combinations of goals and techniques.

#### PLAY DIAGNOSIS

Another phenomenological technique rapidly gaining wide acceptance is the use of play as a projective device. While for the most part this technique has had its widest use with children, it has also been used for diagnosis with adults.<sup>10</sup> With play diagnosis, as with any other projective instrument, effectiveness appears to depend upon the projection of self-patterns to the plastic field provided. Furthermore, the very fact that this is done with play materials gives the subject a considerable measure of protection for he feels he can always deny any hint of self-involvement in the situation, since any reasonable creature can see "that this is only play."

With children, play diagnosis provides an approach not possible by other means, since these young subjects usually do not possess the necessary verbal concepts to express problems verbally, even if they felt free to do so. Play, however, may be employed by the child in the place of language. Through play the child is capable of manipulating his environment and making differentiations not otherwise

<sup>10</sup> See Murray's (139) use of toys in the "Dramatic Productions Test" for example.

possible to one with so limited a vocabulary. For example, while it may be very difficult, if not impossible for the child to define his own position with respect to his parents and the world about him in terms of language, in play he can manipulate both his parents and the rest of the world to his heart's content and may be able to arrive at new relationships in the course of such manipulations. The skilled observer can thus infer meanings which the child himself is unable to put in words.

A further function operative, not only in play therapy but in all projective instruments is the factor of need. It will be observed that child play is very often not mere manipulation but appears to be strongly driven in specific directions closely allied with the individual's own problems. This is particularly true when the child is placed in the sheltered atmosphere of play therapy. For example, when the mother of one little girl went to a mental hospital and was confined for months, the child was not told where her mother had gone, or why. In fact, the entire matter became a subject about which no one would speak. The little girl became more and more anxious about the matter and with the passage of time and no word from her mother, more and more of her play time was spent in playing "hospital." She developed a veritable passion for this type of play and induced other children in the neighborhood to participate with her as well. With the return of her mother to the family circle this play was dropped at once. That play should be so sensitive in expressing the particular problems of a child is exactly what we would expect from the phenomenological point of view. We have previously observed that all behavior represents an attempt upon the part of the individual to satisfy need. We should not be surprised, therefore, that a large part of an individual's behavior, including his play activities, expresses his most pressing problems. The stronger the need, the more the behavior will be directed toward the satisfaction of need, whether it be in play or in any other behavior. The operation of this principle makes play diagnosis and all other free projective techniques remarkably sensitive for the investigation of adjustment.

Like other projective devices the method of play diagnosis may vary widely in the degree of structure or control. On the one hand

may be found such highly controlled play situations in use as those described by Bach (13), Conn (44), and Anna Freud (67). In these the emphasis is almost entirely upon diagnosis. On the other hand, one finds such highly uncontrolled play situations in use by such workers as Allen (2), Snyder (104), or Axline (12). In these latter the primary consideration of the worker lies in therapy rather than diagnosis. The type of play technique and the degree of control presented will depend upon the purposes of the examiner and the psychological frame of reference he has adopted. For strictly diagnostic purposes, especially where time is an important factor, it is likely that a middle ground between these two positions will be most efficient.

The materials used in play diagnosis are extremely varied. They may be described in terms of the degree of plasticity they present. Which are chosen for diagnostic purposes will, of course, depend upon the amount of previous knowledge the examiner has about his client and the areas of interaction of self and objective reality it is desired to explore. For example, play materials may range from such plastic, unstructured (in the sense of giving more or less freedom of expression) media as clay, fingerpainting, block building, and doll play to such highly structured materials as electric trains, a doll's swing, a mechanical derrick, and the like.<sup>11</sup>

#### OTHER PROJECTIVE DEVICES

We cannot do more in so limited a space than suggest a few of the less well-known projective techniques. New ones are being developed so rapidly and in so many fields that it is almost impossible to keep up to date with respect to them. Many of these new devices hold real promise of development for phenomenological diagnosis and research. The following is but a limited sample of those in common use:

Finger Puppets and Masks (93)	Comic Strip Characters (75)
The Similes Test (139)	Fingerpainting (9, 180)
Free designs of limited scope (1)	Szondi (51)
The Horn Hellersberg test (82)	Childrens' Free Artwork (19)
Cloud Pictures (203)	Sentence completion (167)

<sup>11</sup> The interested reader is referred to the following numbers in our bibliography for a sampling of materials in this field which include a much more extensive treatment of this question than is possible here. See (6, 13, 17, 43, 52, 59, 83, 90, 95, 146, 147, 166).

World Test (28)	Reputation test (210)
Picture Frustration (170)	Sidewalk drawings and games
Self Idea Completion (184)	(18)
Tautophone (179)	Psychodrama (135)
Puppets (217)	Mosaic Projection test (88)
	English compositions (74)

#### PROTOCOLS OF THERAPY

With the development of increasingly refined techniques of therapy and particularly with the development of techniques of recording therapeutic sessions, a whole new field of approach to phenomenological research and diagnosis has been laid open (45). In the protocols of therapy we are given an opportunity to observe not only the state of affairs in the individual's organization at any one time, but also the nature and direction of change which occurs in that organization. Like the physician's use of radioactive particles in the blood stream or the use of the fluoroscope, the protocols of therapy give us a priceless opportunity to observe the innermost recesses of personality. As Rogers has pointed out: "The fact that these verbal expressions of inner dynamic are preserved by electrical recording makes possible a detailed analysis of a sort not heretofore possible. Recording has given us a microscope by which we may examine at leisure, and in minute detail, almost every aspect of what was, in its occurrence, a fleeting moment impossible of accurate observation" (164, page 358). Perhaps no other single technique will prove of so great value for our purposes in phenomenological research.

In the course of therapy the client reveals a great deal of information relative to his characteristic organization. He talks of himself, of his ways of seeing things, of the meanings of events for him and in so doing reveals to the observer the very aspects of the phenomenal field of prime importance in phenomenological research and diagnosis. What is more, he does this often with great freedom and clarity. As was true of the projective devices, he feels protected by the counseling atmosphere and under the cloak of this protection can feel free to express his thoughts, desires, dreams, hopes and plans.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This is, of course, not the first time that therapy experience has resulted in the development of personality theory. Psychoanalytic theory is the result of such observations. It was to a considerable extent observations made in therapy that led one of the authors of this book to many of the theoretical posi-

Of particular value for phenomenological research are the protocols of non-directive therapy. In that type of counseling the individual is placed under no external pressure to reveal specific aspects of his problem. He is free to explore the meanings of events in his personal organization without the distortion imposed by external interpretations made in one frame of reference or another. As a result, what the client has to express will represent an effective picture of his phenomenal field from moment to moment. What is more, the therapist, in this type of counseling, assists the process through his techniques of recognition, clarification, and objectification of the client's feelings as the interview proceeds. In this way a client's statement plus the counselor's response constitute an effective unit of description of the former's phenomenal field from moment to moment. If we adopt these units and reduce them to a single statement, we have a workable device which makes possible, not only the observation of the nature of the field but of change in the field as well. The following statements of the client's field were obtained in just this fashion from the Case of Edith Moore (194). Note how they not only show the meaning of events for the client at any moment, but make possible the observation of change (differentiation) in these meanings as the interview proceeds.

I want to do this. I don't know why I can't get started.

I don't know what stops me. There must be a reason.

If I could find the reason, maybe I could accomplish something.

I am afraid that people will say something that will hurt me.

It is hard to put myself in a position where I know I will be hurt.

And again I might not be hurt and then I would get over the fear.

I want to avoid people's remarks. I ought to do it anyway then maybe it wouldn't be so bad the next time.

The possibilities inherent in this technique have only begun to be explored. It seems likely that the use of recordings for the investigation of the dynamics of group discussion might lead to important

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tions we have outlined. One of the most important contributions of Curran (48), Raimy (154), and Rogers (163), for example, is in blazing a trail to the use of therapy protocols for the systematic investigation of theoretical problems. This gives us an important technique by which we can not only develop theory but check its accuracy.

knowledge of group action and political and social psychology. We should be very much interested, for instance, in recordings of an employer-labor conference. Another area in which the technique might well be applied with promise is in the field of learning. Extremely significant insights into this process might be revealed by recordings of all types of learning situations from infancy to old age.

### THE CASE HISTORY

It can probably be said that the case history is the most frequently used diagnostic device in applied psychology. This is particularly true in clinical psychology where the clinician attempts to discover the dynamics underlying his client's behavior. Although important in its own right, it may include any or all data from the previous techniques we have been discussing. In spite of wide use, however, this method of approach to human behavior is almost banned from most psychological research. When it does appear, it has usually been accompanied with apologies of one form or another for being "unscientific." It seems to us most unfortunate to eliminate, because it does not fit a particular method accepted as "scientific," a technique so valuable for the control and prediction of behavior. This point of view has sometimes brought about attempts to make them fit the accepted scientific pattern and has often resulted in an emphasis which makes their use less effective than they might otherwise have been from a phenomenological point of view. For instance, the attempt to establish scientific criteria for case history has resulted in attempts to externalize observations.<sup>13</sup> As a result, the emphasis in the case history is placed upon facts, rather than upon the meaning of those facts for the individual being studied. This is particularly true in social case work in which a very large part of the social worker's valuable time may be spent in checking and rechecking the accuracy of the facts. As a result of such factual emphasis the case history becomes, for the most part, merely an organized compilation of information about a client but contains little of a dynamic nature.

<sup>13</sup> Every one of Dollard's (56) criteria, for instance, is an external observation of behavior. Note for example, "Subject must be viewed as a specimen in a cultural series," "the social situation must be continuously and carefully specified."

From the phenomenological point of view it is not the externally observed facts which are of prime importance in behavior but the meanings of those facts for the individual. It is not whether the juvenile delinquent is, or is not, mistreated at home which is the critical question, but how he feels about it. Clearly, if a child feels he is mistreated, that is enough to motivate behavior and has little reference to whether or not others would agree that the conditions he describes are true or false. In fact, the worker who goes to great pains to demonstrate the falsity of the client's position may only make the situation worse, if it appears to the client that the worker is attacking his position.

The clinician, operating from the phenomenological frame of reference, will be concerned with the meanings of events rather than the events themselves. He will want to know how they appear through his client's eyes. He may even, in some cases, be unconcerned with the accuracy of facts from an external viewpoint. His facts lie in his client's conception of himself and the world in which he moves rather than in the externally observed events. From the phenomenological point of view, the good case history will, of course, still include a great many externally observed facts, though it will include facts and organizations from the phenomenological frame of reference as well.<sup>14</sup> The use of externally observed facts will serve to define the external reality while the use of phenomenologically observed facts will serve to define the individual's concept of himself, his goals and techniques.

#### THE ACCURACY OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS AND RESEARCH

As we have seen in our discussion of the methods of phenomenological diagnosis and research, many of the techniques which have

<sup>14</sup>From a practical point of view, this approach has certain distinct advantages. For instance, it makes possible the accumulation of a useful case history for purposes of treatment with far less probing into the affairs of relatives, school authorities, court records, and the like and should thus help to avoid some unfortunate public feelings about case-history compilers. Furthermore, since less checking and rechecking of facts is required, the amount of time and energy, to say nothing of gas and oil, saved should amount to a very considerable figure in a year's time.



been suggested are at more or less variance with traditional approaches to psychology. This should not appear disturbing, however, since the subject matter of our frame of reference, itself, is not identical with that of external psychology. New frames of reference require new techniques and while they may admittedly be somewhat crude at first, they improve with age and experience. But this, by no stretch of the imagination, licenses or even implies that the phenomenological psychologist is freed of the burden of proof. While science permits of varied frames of reference and varied methods of approach, it must always insist upon proof. Phenomenological psychology must prove its position or be discarded for purposes of our fundamental discipline.

Since the problem of our science is the prediction of behavior, prediction must always remain the first criterion of accuracy whatever frame of reference is utilized. What leads to more effective and accurate prediction is admissible evidence. What does not must be discarded for that which does.

Many of the facts of external science are essential for a phenomenological system. In fact, these form the basis without which a phenomenological system would be impossible, for they define external reality; and we have seen that it is the meanings of this external reality for the individual which determine his behavior. We may say, therefore, that external science attempts to define and predict external reality, while phenomenological science is concerned with the definition and prediction of the meanings or interpretations of reality for the individual. This means that phenomenological psychology will be concerned with interpretations and the success or failure of its predictions will be measured in terms of the accuracy of its interpretations.

How shall we measure this accuracy? Admittedly, this will be difficult at first but there are already appearing valuable contributions to this problem. For example, the Social Science Research Council formulated a series of criteria for the validating of a social theory (5). These criteria will supply us with valuable techniques for the examination and use of phenomenological interpretations. They represent an excellent and valuable point of departure for the solution

of our problem. We have listed these here with our own discussion as they apply to phenomenological research.

#### FEELINGS OF SUBJECTIVE CERTAINTY

Although feelings of certainty with respect to a particular factor or meaning in phenomenological research can never be taken by themselves as proof positive of the existence of those factors, nevertheless, such feelings of certainty may indicate a degree of agreement or consistency with other known factors. They also may often supply valuable leads which can be verified or discarded upon further observation or experimental check. Certainly it is true that a great many clinical judgments, as well as experimental leads or hypotheses, are made upon just such feelings as these.

#### CONFORMITY WITH KNOWN FACTS

If a theory is to stand, it must be possible to explain all known facts in a particular discipline or lose its place as a workable theoretical explanation. If a particular meaning or interpretation can be shown to be in conformity with all known facts operative at the moment, presumably we are justified in accepting it as proof of accuracy. In any science, however, it is necessary to be extremely wary of relying too heavily upon this test of accuracy. In dealing with subjective materials, it is very easy to make interpretations consistent with one's own frame of reference, even though, in reality, the interpretations may be quite in error.<sup>15</sup> This is the danger of any frame of reference. The individual who adopts a frame of reference must be constantly on guard lest he fail to see the need for a new one when the need arises.

#### MENTAL MANIPULATION

Mental manipulation refers to the subjecting of an idea or interpretation to mental juggling in attempt to determine whether or not

<sup>15</sup> Some of the bizarre interpretations of psychoanalysis are an example in point. On many occasions these interpretations will be found (by those in another frame of reference) to exceed all bounds of reason. Apparently this is due to the enthusiasm of the members of that group for their way of thinking and their attempts to stretch a frame of reference to include all known facts.

it fits the particular problem at hand. Allport calls this "discerning." This is essentially what the diagnostician does in formulating his diagnosis. He makes an interpretation, manipulates it mentally to determine whether or not it fits the particular problem with which he is confronted and either discards it in favor of another or keeps the interpretation if it fits the facts of the case. Again, such a technique does not prove the validity of an assumption beyond doubt and cannot be used alone as a measure of the accuracy of interpretation.

#### PREDICTIVE POWER

In the final analysis the test of predictive power of a theory or interpretation must remain the most important single criterion of phenomenological research. Since the very basis of any science is the attempt to derive prediction, phenomenological science must be able to arrive at accurate prediction more effectively than other techniques or be discarded as scientific method in favor of that which will predict more effectively. As Allport has pointed out, however, there are serious pitfalls even in this; for it is quite possible that prediction may occur without theory at all or that prediction may be possible although based on a rationalized theoretical framework. For example, one might accurately predict that the boys in a particular neighborhood would form a fairly closely knit gang, but the theoretical basis for arriving at such a prediction might be any number of possible theories. For instance, one might theorize that this was true because boys are homosexual at that age, because boys like company, because they all shoot marbles, or because they have nothing better to do. Thus the prediction would not produce evidence of the accuracy of the theory.

#### SOCIAL AGREEMENT

This test of validity is based on the assumption that "if many people, especially if experts, accept an explanation or conceptualization it may be said to have the presumption of validity. . . . The criterion takes on greater value if it can be shown that competent investigators have come *independently* to the same conceptualization." Obviously, there are difficulties involved in such agreement as checks

on the validity of interpretation as well. This is particularly true where there is the possibility of prestige factors involved or where the members of a particular school of thought, all versed in the same error, come to agreement. Under such circumstances the result can only be perpetuation of error.<sup>16</sup>

Allport points out that a possible extension of the test is to submit the interpretations to the subject himself. Presumably, if it fits with what he finds true of himself this should be an indication of some degree of accuracy of interpretation although again, it will by no means be positive proof of accuracy.

#### INTERNAL CONSISTENCY

Interpretations may be made to confront one another as a check of internal consistency. In this case, if two points of view oppose each other it may be suspected that one or both is inaccurate. Whatever interpretation is made should presumably contribute to a dynamic whole which is consistent within itself.

It seems likely that no one of the above tests is sufficient to warrant acceptance as indisputable scientific proof of the accuracy or inaccuracy of a particular interpretation or theoretical position. Nevertheless, it is possible to establish, by a combination of one or more of these means, a position which is reasonably tenable in the light of human fallibility. With the passage of time such positions may be proved to be inaccurate by later events, but, in the meantime, science must progress on the basis of that which it holds to be true by the best checks it can devise at the moment. No science can do better than that without knowledge of the nature of absolute truth—a discovery not likely in our time.

This may seem at first glance a most discouraging situation in which there appears no hope of exact proof ever. A moment's reflection, however, will make it clear that all science is in the same boat and that even the older physical sciences must contend with these difficulties. Even so simple a function as 2 plus 2 equals 4 is only true to those using the same number system. The fact that adults in

<sup>16</sup> Something of this nature has occurred in connection with intelligence testing where one finds almost invariably that psychologists, who made the tests, make the highest scores!

our culture invariably get the same answer is due to a similarity of meanings as a result of common experiences. It is well known that children not yet exposed to those meanings get maddeningly different answers on occasion. In spite of our inability to comprehend absolute truth, however, the function of science is to explain and to predict in terms of the meanings we possess. The above criteria should aid us in accomplishing this goal with less error than we might otherwise encounter and should result in theory and practice effective for our purposes and needs at our present level of knowledge.

## Σ CHAPTER XIII Σ

### *The Personal Approach to Therapy—Inductive Methods*

OUR earliest way of looking at the problem of human maladjustment was to see disturbing behavior in others as the result of evil forces at work within the individual. It was fashionable then to blame the individual for everything. Whatever he did that was undesirable was ascribed to his possession by the devil, to willfulness, evil spirits, and the like. Treatment measures growing out of that point of view were largely directed at, literally, "kicking the devil out of him." Even today this punishment and quarantine philosophy may be observed in some methods of treating criminals, the mentally retarded, and the mentally ill.

Later in our history psychologists and sociologists pointed out the importance of the environment in behavior. The person could be blamed for nothing because he was, willy-nilly, at the mercy of the forces which surrounded him. As a result of this approach, which is popular even today, the cause of every human behavior was sought in factors outside the individual. He was removed from his bad home situation, curricula were adjusted for his sake and many other highly desirable reforms were instituted. Unfortunately none of these methods has operated with complete success. People still become threatened and unhappy even in the midst of what, on the surface, appear to be splendid environments. Somehow we must discover a more adequate understanding of behavior and more effective methods of therapy than have existed heretofore.

Where else should we seek the means to aid individuals to better adjustment if not in the science of behavior? This seems a logical place to look but, interestingly enough, the science of psychology, until recently, has given comparatively little attention to the problems of therapy. There are even some in our science who have taken the

amazing position that psychologists have no business meddling in psychotherapy at all! This, in spite of the clear mandate implied for our science by the very name "psychotherapy." Even today, the great majority of clinical psychologists are almost exclusively concerned with diagnosis, while the challenge of therapy is taken up by groups whose primary interests lie in the physical organism, the structure of society, the transmission of knowledge, the protection of society, or the transmission of moral law. While these disciplines undoubtedly have much to offer, an adequate program of psychotherapy must be based on the science of behavior. This places upon us not only an obligation but a responsibility. If the science of behavior is to meet its obligations to the society within which it operates it must contribute to the welfare of human beings. It must not only learn *about* behavior; it must actively concern itself with the adjustment and happiness of the members of society as well.

#### NEED FOR A THEORY OF THERAPY

Most of the therapeutic methods in current use, with the possible exception of psychoanalysis and, more recently, non-directive therapy, have little or no consistent theoretical framework for the practices they encompass. Our modern techniques have simply "grewed like Topsy." As one or another therapeutic device was found useful or effective by one therapist or another, it has been added to the stockpile of available methods. One may search the literature in vain for a consistent theoretical explanation of such diverse types of treatment as catharsis, insulin shock, personal influence, reassurance, persuasion, hypnosis, and institutional placement. Such methods of technique development undoubtedly give the therapist an extremely free hand in the choice of his techniques. Anything which works with even a few clients may be preserved and used with others. Without a consistent theoretical framework however, the therapist is reduced to sheer trial-and-error operation. He can only try his techniques and see what happens to his client. This makes an interesting contribution to the literature but may be hard on, if not disastrous to, the client. Indeed, since clients are all different, "one man's meat may be another's poison." There is real danger that a bad technique may work

with some clients and be retained by the therapist for further use to the detriment of others.

Therapy must have a consistent theoretical position not only for the welfare of its clients but for the future of therapy itself. While some progress can be made in empirical development, the progress that can be made in this way is limited. An eclectic system leads directly to inconsistency and contradiction, for techniques derived from conflicting frames of reference are bound to be conflicting. Sooner or later there comes a point beyond which progress is blocked until theoretical understanding provides a measuring instrument for evaluation and points directions for further advance. While phenomenological theory is by no means the final answer to the problems of therapy, it seems to offer a consistent frame of reference in terms of which therapeutic techniques may be examined and new directions for research projected. The following pages are devoted to an examination of the implications of such a theory for practice in psychotherapy.

#### WHY DO PEOPLE NEED PSYCHOTHERAPY?

Human beings are continuously, insatiably striving to achieve the satisfaction of need. From birth to death the maintenance and enhancement of the phenomenal self is the universal goal toward which the individual appears to be moving. Every act, as simple as crooking a finger, or as complex as planning a peace is motivated and controlled by this need. Because society has provided the experiences from which the individual's phenomenal field is organized, the behavior of most of us is acceptable to ourselves and to our fellows. Raised in a particular culture, we reflect it and develop phenomenal selves fairly adequate to meet its demands. We get along more or less smoothly and with a minimum of threat from our environment.

Any one of us, at any time, however, may become increasingly threatened and find that our concepts of ourselves, for one reason or another, are no longer adequate to assist us in achieving optimal need satisfaction. We may find our efforts at need satisfaction blocked in one form or another and our behavior inappropriate to deal with the



situations we confront. In any of the ways we have discussed in Chapter VII we may become threatened personalities. In short, we become maladjusted. Given time, most of us are able to achieve a reorganization of our self-concepts and a greater harmony with the world we live in again. Most of our maladjustments are minor or temporary and we shortly regain an equilibrium with the non-self aspects of our fields.

Some people however, may be unable for one reason or another to arrive at new definitions of self and so may continue for long periods to be threatened, ineffective and unhappy. They may feel so threatened by their position as to be unable to differentiate new relationships with the world about them. They continue to be threatened for long periods or for life. We might take the position that society has often taken with these people and disregard them, quarantine them, or kill them off. But to do so is to lose the potential value of these members for society and requires a great waste of time, energy, and expense, while still more persons are removed from productivity to take care of those who are severely threatened. A much better and certainly more humane approach is to help these threatened people to new and more adequate definitions of themselves which will make it possible for them to live effectively and productively in the social system. This is the goal of therapy.

In practice the psychotherapist is called upon to assist two major groups of threatened personalities. On the one hand, he will be asked by threatened persons, themselves, for aid. Sometimes these will be ones for whom society also recognizes a need for treatment. But just as frequently they may be others who are unhappy and ineffective and whom society does not recognize as problems at all. On the other hand, there will be those persons about whom society is concerned, but who may or may not feel the need for assistance, themselves. This latter class will include a great many children who are unaware of the possibilities of any other life than that which they are leading. It will include, as well, those persons too restricted by the physiological, environmental, psychological, or temporal limitations on the development of an adequate self to be able to seek therapeutic assistance.

These, too, are the responsibility of therapy, and the methods we devise must be capable of assisting both groups of threatened personalities as effectively and as economically as possible.

### WHAT IS PSYCHOTHERAPY?

#### THERAPY DEFINED

We have seen that human beings are constantly, insatiably striving to maintain their organizations. Sometimes, however, the organism is blocked in its striving by internal or external factors which prevent maximum achievement of this end.<sup>1</sup> Since the need to maintain organization is all pervading, however, the organism, not only can, but, must move toward health if it is free to do so. It is this freeing of the organism to move toward health with which therapy of any sort is concerned. We might define therapy as follows: *Therapy is the provision of a facilitating situation wherein the normal drive of the organism for maintenance or enhancement of organization is freed to operate.* In medical therapy the physician or surgeon provides this "therapeutic situation" by eliminating or inhibiting the blocking factor, or by building up the organism itself so that it may operate as efficiently as possible. We shall find this definition describes the process in psychotherapy, as well.

#### PSYCHOTHERAPY DEFINED

Psychotherapy is that branch of therapy concerned primarily with behavioral adjustment. Like all other therapies, it, too, is directed toward freeing the individual to operate effectively. Psychologically, the threatened person's need is impeded, not by physical obstacles but by inadequate differentiations of people, events, ideas, and concepts. The individual's satisfaction of need is blocked when for one reason or another his concept of himself is inadequate to deal with

<sup>1</sup> Such blocking may occur either in physiological or psychological terms. For example, the organism's need to maintain organization may be blocked physiologically by a germ, an injury, or impairment of its function due to aging, malnutrition or the like. Psychologically, such blocks appear to be due to failures of differentiation, particularly those involving the self. Psychosomatics is now demonstrating that there are even physiologic effects of psychologic blocking and vice versa.

his perceptions. We might, therefore, define psychotherapy from a phenomenological point of view as: *the provision of experience whereby the individual is enabled to make more adequate differentiations of the phenomenal self and its relationship to external reality.* If such differentiations can be made, the need of the individual for maintenance and enhancement of the phenomenal self will do the rest. Psychotherapy thus appears to be a process of providing opportunity for differentiation. The task of the therapist is to provide a kind of experience for his client which will make it possible for differentiations to occur which will produce a phenomenal self more adequate to deal with life.

#### THE EXTERNAL APPROACH TO THERAPY

The external approach to therapy is the natural outgrowth of seeing behavior as a direct response to stimuli. It follows from an S-R description of behavior that practically all of the active determinants of behavior lie outside the individual. That concept leads directly to treatment stressing environmental change. From such a point of view it is not surprising that the major portion of the therapist's time is taken up with diagnosis. The assumption is—given a sufficiently accurate diagnosis, therapy can be carried out by any intelligent person almost mechanically. The major trick is to discover to what the individual is or has been reacting. Knowing this, treatment becomes a fairly simple process of changing the stimulus. We have already seen how inadequate such a description of behavior may be.

Even psychologists well grounded in this behavioristic school of thought become phenomenological, however, when they turn to treatment although it is probable that many of them would be horrified at the thought. One does not need to look far in even the most conservative child psychologist's work, for example, before he comes across such suggestions as "Find out why the child is doing this," "Find some means of motivation for the child to keep his bed dry" or "Many children seem to use such techniques as aggressive devices by means of which they may get back at their parents." Actually, a strictly "pure" external approach to therapy is little used by therapists anymore.

## THE PERSONAL APPROACH TO THERAPY

If the phenomenological description of behavior we have outlined in this volume is accurate, it follows that all psychotherapy of whatever type must produce change in the client's phenomenal field. If behavior is a function of change in the phenomenal field, then, to change behavior it will be necessary to change meanings in the field. Since change occurs through differentiation, to change behavior it will be necessary to bring about new differentiations either in the organization of the phenomenal self or in the client's perception of the external world or both. This will be true whether we attempt to assist a particular client to change his personal meanings by working with the client alone, or whether we attempt to induce a change in his field by shifting his environment in some fashion. Whether we work with the environment surrounding our client or whether we work with the client himself in a face to face situation our goal is the same. We hope to make possible new meanings for the client in his phenomenal field.

If we examine modern psychotherapy in the light of this discussion, two general methods of attack on the problem of treatment may be observed. The first of these we might term the "Inductive Approach." In this approach an attempt is made to induce new meanings in the client's field (either consciously or unconsciously on the part of the therapist) in a direction which the therapist believes will aid his client to more effective or satisfying behavior. Most of the common techniques of therapy fall in this group. It includes all types of environmental therapy and those kinds of individual techniques commonly called "directive." Most of the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to the implications of a phenomenological system for the Inductive Approach to Treatment. The list of techniques employed in this approach is extremely lengthy and we will not be able to give each method as much attention as we might like in so limited a space. We can, however, attempt to sketch in some of the major principles which seem to apply to the majority of these methods.

A second general class of methods we shall call the "self-directive approach." In this approach the therapist relies upon the client's own

need to find the solution to his problems. He does not attempt to induce any particular change in the client's meanings but devotes his major efforts to creating a situation wherein the client may be freed to explore his field and make such changes himself in whatever direction he desires. This approach is commonly known as "non-directive" therapy. We shall devote the following chapter to its consideration.

#### THE INDUCTIVE APPROACH TO TREATMENT

Most of the therapeutic techniques in the Inductive Approach<sup>2</sup> were originally devised in an external frame of reference. A tremendous number have been developed and used more or less effectively for many many years. They include both environmental techniques and those designed to work directly with the client. Among the environmental methods are included such techniques as: institutional placement, foster-home placement, camp therapy, the use of interest groups, special schools, curriculum adjustments and the attempt to change parental attitudes. Individual techniques include shock therapy, hypnoanalysis, psychoanalysis, and the use of various forms of suggestion, personal influence, exhortation, ordering and forbidding, and a host of others. All, however, seem primarily concerned with inducing in the client some change in his personal meanings.

#### INDUCTIVE THERAPY MUST BE DEFINED IN PHENOMENOLOGICAL TERMS

##### CLIENT MEANINGS BASIC

The meaning existing for the client must always be the major elements of concern in inductive therapy since it is change in these meanings that therapy is designed to foster. On the surface this seems like a very minor point, but it is amazing how often it has

<sup>2</sup> We use the term inductive here in place of the term "directive" for the following reasons: (1) The term "directive" does not seem to us adequate to describe what actually is attempted in this type of therapy. (2) We wish to avoid the unfortunate controversy now going on over the use of this term "directive." (3) The use of the term "inductive" serves to sharpen the distinction of a phenomenological approach to this kind of therapy.

been overlooked in psychological and sociological treatment. It must always be recalled that client and therapist are operating in different frames of reference and what appears "good" to one may appear as exactly the opposite to the other. For example's sake, let us permit our imaginations to run freely for a moment and compare some common treatment techniques with what they *might* mean to the client:

Treatment Techniques	Client Meanings
Telling a child to be good.	He thinks I'm bad!
Giving a needy client coal.	I can't support my family!
Warning a client to avoid day-dreaming.	Good Lord! I'm going crazy!
Reassuring that "this is going to be all right."	He's afraid it isn't going to be all right.
Giving advice.	I can do that now—it's his responsibility—He told me to go ahead.
Foster-home placement.	"They think my family is no good. Well, I'll show them guys!"
Institutional placement.	"I'm a real tough guy, I am. They gotta lock me up."

These seem like extreme examples but unfortunately they often are not. External approaches to therapy have often led us astray by emphasizing the observable behavior of the client and the events occurring to him as the aspects of primary importance. From the phenomenological point of view these are mere symptoms of the dynamic processes going on within the client's frame of reference.

As we have seen, the goal of inductive therapy is to produce a more or less specific change in the client's meanings. Since behavior is a function of these meanings, therapy can only be successful if it produces a permanent change in meanings which will insure a consequent change in behavior. Many of our common therapeutic techniques result in such meaning changes but it seems likely that such techniques can be vastly improved if they can be consciously, rather than haphazardly used for this purpose. With this change of emphasis it seems possible that we may arrive at better and more predictable results. But how can we bring about such changes in meaning?

## DIAGNOSIS IN INDUCTIVE THERAPY

In the first place it will be necessary to create a situation in which the client will be free to make changes in his phenomenal field. This is primarily a function of utilizing the force of the client's need and eliminating threat, both of which topics we shall want to discuss in greater length in the sections to follow. Secondly, it will be necessary consciously to design the experiences we provide for the client to insure the particular meaning changes we desire. To do this will require an extremely accurate diagnosis with respect to the nature of the client's phenomenal field. Many techniques we have described in the previous chapter will be useful to us here. Our emphasis in diagnosis will be much less concerned with objective facts than is ordinarily true in diagnosis and much more concerned with the client's own personal reference to the facts as he perceives them. Most important, we shall want to discover how he feels about things, what are his desires, hopes, wishes and yearnings. Particularly we shall want to discover how he defines himself.

In the preceding chapter we have seen something of the problems involved in phenomenological diagnosis. To achieve accurate diagnoses in this frame of reference is no easy matter. It requires a very keen therapist and one who is capable of a great deal of empathy with a particular client. The Personal Approach requires of the diagnostician an extraordinary capacity for control and subjugation of the therapist's own self. This is by no means simple. It requires of the diagnostician that he be as much a "kind of person" as a skilled technician.

Inductive methods in therapy require some activity on the part of the therapist to provide experiences which will result in the desired change in client meanings. To do this will require a diagnosis which makes possible, not only an understanding of the client's present field, but the prediction of his future fields as well. Without the accurate prediction of future-field states the therapist will be unable to forecast the effect of any specific treatment measure he takes with his client. It is of vital importance that the therapist be able to understand and project these future meanings. In the case of the treatment

of a delinquent, he must be able to foresee how the child will feel about institutional placement, for example. If this cannot be forecast, treatment becomes no more than stabbing in the dark and the child may feel more threatened than ever by his new situation.

#### MEANING, CHANGE, AND TECHNIQUES OF THERAPY

Having obtained an adequate diagnostic picture of how the client and his world appears to him, it will be possible for us to provide new experiences designed to change these personal meanings. A great many techniques in both environmental and individual therapy in common use will prove of value in this task. As a matter of fact, many techniques are already being used in this way either consciously or unconsciously by large numbers of therapists. In environmental therapy, for instance, curriculum adjustment is often used to make it possible for the child with feelings of failure and defeat to find success experiences, giving him a new lease on his academic life and making it possible for him to define himself and his abilities in more adequate terms. The same thing is often accomplished in foster-home placement, when a child is removed from a home situation creating undesirable and harmful meanings for him to a foster home designed to produce different and more socially acceptable types of meanings in the youngster's phenomenal field. Techniques of exploring the client's field of meaning often pay big dividends even in problems of child training like enuresis. For instance, a certain family had tried for two years to get their young five-year-old to stop his persistent bed wetting but all to no avail. One evening while tucking in her son, the mother said "Son, when are you going to stop wetting the bed?"

The boy replied, "But Mom, I don't have to. I have a rubber sheet!" Once this meaning of the rubber sheet had been discovered, therapy was simple. Next day mother and son coöperated in making the bed and pointedly left off the sheet. And the child hasn't wet the bed since!

Many of our common techniques of dealing with the individual himself likewise appear to depend for their effectiveness upon the degree to which they make new personal meanings possible. This is what most guidance counseling depends upon. Through providing



the client with information from testing and from occupational data, it is hoped that some change will occur in his own personal way of looking at things. When we inform our client of the nature of his aptitudes and abilities we are hoping thereby to open new ways of thinking about himself which may lead to more effective behavior. The same principle is true for a number of other individual techniques such as suggestion, interpretation, "marshalling the evidence," and even education. Indeed, it might even be said that the criterion for the success of these methods is directly dependent upon the degree to which they result in personal meaning changes.

### THE SELF-CONCEPT IN INDUCTIVE THERAPY

#### GOALS AND TECHNIQUES IN THERAPY

In inductive therapy the meaning changes we seek to bring about may be in the client's goals, his techniques, his phenomenal self or in all of these at once. In fact, it is probable that no change occurs in any one of these without some change in the others as well. If we conceive of the human personality as the expression of the phenomenal field the "depth" of therapy will be a function of the portion of the field in which we attempt to operate. Therapy concerned primarily with change in goals and techniques represents a less fundamental type of treatment than that which is directed at the very core of personality—the individual's concepts of self. Therapy on a goals and techniques level will often be all that is required to aid the threatened individual to more adequate behavior. Frequently it will be possible through assisting the client to the differentiation of new goals and techniques to regain a feeling of adequacy and need satisfaction. So simple a measure as helping an adolescent girl to discover more attractive methods of hair styling or helping the adolescent boy to a better understanding of the rudiments of etiquette in boy-girl relationships may go a long way toward assisting them to greater feelings of adequacy and more effective behavior.

At other times, however, it will be necessary for therapy to go far beyond a level of goals and techniques to operate more directly upon the phenomenal self. As we have seen, it is the inadequacy of

the phenomenal self to accept its perceptions which results in the most serious threats to personality. In the personal approach to therapy, some change in the self-concept is often demanded. The inductive therapist, therefore, seeks to discover the nature of his client's self-concept and how it may be changed. He recognizes that unless he can accomplish some change in this important organization, therapy has had little effect.

While many personality adjustments can be effected through change in the individual's goals and techniques, there is also danger that such a level of operation may be utilized when a more fundamental change is called for. Many times, to assist the client most effectively it will be necessary to aid him to more basic adjustments. Goals and techniques therapy is often palliative but with the very threatened client does not reduce the threat more than momentarily. To assist the very threatened individual by helping him only to the extent of discovering new goals and techniques may only result in making him dependent upon the therapist or, worse yet, may cause him to feel he has not been helped at all. To help the man just out of prison to find a job may be only the beginning of therapy, yet, too often, it is as far as therapy ever gets. It is not enough for the therapist to pat himself on the back over having helped a very threatened client to differentiate new goals and techniques. His job has only begun.

#### AWARENESS OF NECESSITY OF CHANGE

The very threatened client needs assistance in achieving a more fundamental reorganization of self. To supply the experiences needed to bring about such changes in the phenomenal self of his client will require of the therapist a very high degree of skill in moment to moment diagnosis and an unusual depth of understanding. To aid the client to accomplish such a change in personal organization will require in the first place, an awareness on the part of the client that some change is necessary. Unless the client is aware that a change is necessary, it is clear that change is not likely to occur. Unfortunately, to bring about such an awareness is distinctly not easy. To the client, the necessity for change is likely to appear extremely

threatening to his personal organization. In fact, this very threatening aspect of awareness may be the very reason why he has not been aware of the situation before. Almost any counselor has been confronted at one time or another by the client sent to him for help who does not feel that he has a problem, is completely incapable of understanding why he should have to come for counseling, and may even feel quite insulted by the implications involved. He may even regard the offer of assistance from the counselor as shocking and threatening in the extreme. It is not surprising therefore that he may seek to protect himself or escape from so painful a situation. To "face life's problems" is undoubtedly an excellent *objective* rule of behavior but it must be recalled that from the client's viewpoint this can be a frightening process. Indeed, if he had been able to follow this advice he would not have been a subject for therapy!

Despite the difficulties involved in bringing about awareness, inductive therapy must provide experiences which make awareness possible without so threatening the client that he refuses further help. This makes a very narrow path for the inductive therapist to follow. He must walk a veritable tightrope between the fact that without awareness of the necessity for change little can be done to help his client, on the one hand, and on the other the necessity for dealing with the problem of threat felt by his client when awareness occurs. If the client does not feel his concept of himself is inadequate, *he* has no problem; if he feels so threatened by this realization that he rejects therapy, he cannot be helped. To resolve this impasse, the inductive therapist must possess a tremendous skill and understanding of human beings beyond anything demanded of most other healing arts. For the most part, the development of these attributes must remain a function of wide experience. There is no readily available body of knowledge from which to acquire it.

#### ACCEPTANCE IN INDUCTIVE THERAPY

The inductive therapist's problems in bringing about a reorganization of the client's self-concept do not stop with awareness, however. In order for change in the self-concept to occur, the latter must not only be aware of a faulty self-definition, he must also be aided to

accept a new one. The crucial problem upon which the effectiveness of any type of therapy depends, in the final analysis, must always be—whether or not the client is able to accept into his personal organization the new ideas or concepts he gains in the course of his experience. This in turn will govern whether or not he is able to use these new concepts effectively. The success of therapy itself must be judged in the degree to which this is made possible for the client. In a vocational guidance problem, for instance, if the client is unable to accept the information supplied by his counselor from test interpretations, it is certain that his behavior is not likely to change and he is no better off than he was before. In the field of adjustment therapy the problem of acceptance is even more difficult of accomplishment.

Acceptance is not a simple matter, and it is important to recognize that there may be a very wide difference between a superficial acceptance and a real one. By a superficial acceptance is meant, an idea which exists in the thinking or understanding of the client but which is not made a part of his field of personal meaning or pattern of action. All of us are familiar with this kind of lack of acceptance in such examples as the man who *thinks* he should go to church but who doesn't go, or the student who *knows* he should study his French but goes to the movies instead. Most people do not misbehave because they do not know any better, but because the proper concepts are not a part of their organization at the moment of action.

Whether or not acceptance can occur in therapy appears to be dependent upon the degree to which new concepts are, or can be made to be, consistent with the client's already existing organization. If new ideas are consistent with the client's conception of himself they may be readily accepted.<sup>3</sup> Lecky (107), for example, points out some interesting experiments with children who regarded themselves as poor spellers. The only treatment accorded these children was directed

<sup>3</sup> The success of psychoanalysis appears in large measure due to its method of dealing with this problem. The phenomenon of transference in that type of therapy seems to make it possible for the client to accept new concepts through his dependence upon the therapist. The major problem in breaking the transference appears to be due to the client's hesitancy to accept the new role without his therapist's support.

at showing them how their definition of themselves as non-spellers was inconsistent with other ways in which they regarded themselves. Under this treatment, some of the children even took up spelling as a hobby! It seems likely that their approach to therapy may have important implications for those who regard themselves as bad readers. Similarly, the difficulties of many of us with mathematics may well be discovered to be no more than faulty self-definitions.

A great deal of inductive therapy in the past has probably been ineffective because of its failure to bring about client acceptance. Much of inductive therapy as a result has been deeply frustrating for both the client and the therapist. On the one hand the former has often felt his experience was a failure because, although the therapist showed him what to do, he was unable to do it. On the other hand, the therapist has often felt frustrated as he observed his time and energies wasted on a client who could not accept the good advice he was given. The whole problem of acceptance is a comparatively new concept, at least for the majority of therapists, and it does not seem likely we shall succeed in discovering ways of bringing it about directly for some time to come. Changes in the self-concept can never be made directly but only through the experience and activity of the client himself. The task is made increasingly difficult when we recall that the self-concept is a very stable organization and tends to resist change from without. The therapist can provide opportunity and experience but he cannot control the direction of change in the client's self-concept with any great degree of accuracy. It is even possible that direct attack upon the client's self-concept may represent so great a threat to the client as to result in therapy failure. We are still a very long way from being able to handle these functions effectively.

#### NEED IN INDUCTIVE THERAPY

In inductive treatment the therapist must be constantly aware of the need of his client to maintain and enhance his concept of himself. He recognizes that if therapy is to be effective, it must result in self-enhancement. Without satisfaction of need, therapy is foredoomed to failure. Indeed, the maladjusted state, itself, is the result

of the client's striving for need satisfaction. So far as he is concerned his maladjusted state appears to him as the best possible way in which he can achieve what he is looking for. Whatever therapeutic experiences are designed for him then, must provide more opportunity for self-enhancement than he has succeeded in achieving in his former condition. What is more, they must provide opportunity for self-enhancement as the client perceives it; not as the therapist sees the problem. It seems likely that many failures in therapy can be directly traced to failure to consider this important principle. For example, it is well known that many high school girls are improperly placed in their curricula. Many of the girls now enrolled in college preparatory courses would probably be much better off in the long run in a home economics sequence. But the client's need exists in the present and satisfaction of need is an immediate rather than a delayed matter. Unfortunately, the home economics curricula have social as well as educative values attached to them. In many schools the home economics sequences are still regarded, not only by the students but even by the faculty, as being a "course you take if you can't do anything else." Obviously, if a plan of environmental treatment includes changing a child's course from college preparatory to home economics, these factors must be considered. To make such a change for a child may even be seen by the client, not as self-enhancement but, as self-abasement. It must be remembered that the values perceived by the therapist may not exist at all for the client. Indeed, it is probable that this difference of frames of reference lies at the root of the ineffectiveness of much of our formal education. The individual cannot escape seeking to satisfy his need for self-enhancement. Therapy, to be effective must recognize this need and devise its methods accordingly.

#### CONFLICTING "NEEDS" HINDER THERAPY

Casual observation would lead one to conclude that individuals have many and conflicting needs. From the personal frame of reference, however, there is but one need. All others are goals through which this need reaches satisfaction. This point of view has important implications for therapy. For example, a particular client may appear

to have strong goals for sex behavior, to be approved by those about him, to get A's in his courses, to be approved by his parents, to "eat, drink and be merry," and to fly an airplane. If all of these goals are regarded as needs, therapy may result in disaster for the client. The achievement of some makes that of others impossible, and the therapist may find himself shortly in such a welter of crosscutting and conflicting directions as to be highly confused himself. The aim of therapy is to produce *need* satisfaction—not necessarily goal satisfaction. Actually, much of therapy will be concerned with change of goals such that greater satisfaction of need may be possible for the client.

Since "needs" are ordinarily thought to be inherent in the organism and not subject to change, consider what this implies for the homosexual, the compulsive eater, or the "oversexed." If such behavior is regarded as the result of need, the therapist can only ameliorate, he cannot aid these people to a fully satisfying adjustment in our society. Seeing such behavior as a form of need satisfaction through goals which are subject to change not only makes therapy possible but offers real hope for the unfortunate client. Need satisfaction is not, necessarily, to be achieved by one goal alone.

### THE PROBLEM OF THREAT IN INDUCTIVE THERAPY

#### THREAT COMPLICATES THERAPY

Persons seeking therapy are persons under threat. This feeling of threat is of extreme importance to the eventual adjustment of the individual and to therapy. The very existence of threat prevents the maladjusted person from improving his position. For example, the housewife who cannot accept her role as housekeeper, cook, nursemaid, laundress, and a hundred other roles, but conceives of herself as something quite different, finds herself constantly confronted by the hard realities of daily life. These are likely to appear to her expressly designed to frustrate and force upon her the very facts from which she would prefer to escape. The pile of laundry reminds her that she is the laundress, mealtimes demand that she be cook, and baby's insistent wail may threaten her concept of herself to the

point where any aspect of her daily life appears threatening and coercing beyond endurance.

Such feelings of threat have very unfortunate results on the likelihood of eventual adjustment. Small threats can often be tolerated but when threat becomes great it may make change in self-concept almost impossible. It will be recalled that we have described the basic need of the individual as the maintenance and enhancement of the phenomenal self. This need operates whether the individual feels adequate or not. Indeed, threat might even be described as the result of the individual's failure to satisfy need. Under threat he has no choice but to defend his organization and change to some other organization becomes extremely unlikely so long as this feeling of threat remains. He is driven, in spite of himself, to defend the organization which exists. Observations of this sort of behavior in daily life are so common they have been made into aphorisms like "Nobody wins an argument," and "You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make him drink."

Under threat and the necessity for self-defense the individual fails to differentiate clearly and accurately. His differentiations are likely to be false and misleading and provide no adequate basis for change to occur. The maladjusted housewife we have mentioned above cannot see her tasks clearly. Under threat she cannot perceive that any meaning exists in her work. The woman next door who sells face powder at the local department store may appear to our housewife to have a much better, more meaningful, and important task than her own. Feeling threatened by her daily tasks, it is difficult for her to accept them. Perceptions become distorted and differentiations become misleading or result in false conclusions. It becomes difficult or impossible to convince her that her job is important, meaningful, and dignified. The more threatened she feels by the reality which surrounds her the more unlikely adequate differentiation becomes.

#### THREATS IN THERAPY ARE COMMON

For successful inductive therapy it is necessary for us to think in terms of providing positive experiences leading to a change in the self-concept while at the same time avoiding the appearance of threat.



This aspect of threat is almost completely disregarded in many environmental therapy techniques. It is common knowledge that "welfare cases" are often extremely unsympathetic and "downright ungrateful" to the social worker or agency seeking to help them. With the best of intentions, the agency inquires into the home life of its client, discovers he needs coal, food, or assistance in finding a job. These "needs" the agency then seeks to satisfy often with no realization that any of these acts may appear as extremely threatening to the client. To him they may appear only as invasions of his privacy, proof of his ineptitude in caring for his family, and a slight against his manhood. So long as one thinks of therapy as a process of manipulation of external factors alone it is difficult to see how this situation can be changed.

In individual therapy too, such threats to the client may often be observed. When ideas presented by the counselor are not consistent with his fundamental personality organization, those ideas represent a threat and he can do nothing else but resist them. Mittelman and Wolff (134) have checked this experimentally. By measuring skin temperature of the client during psychoanalysis it could be observed that he showed no fear reactions until questions were posed which placed him in a threatened position. The same principle is put to work in the techniques of "lie-detection." The stronger, more convincingly threatening concepts are forced upon the client, moreover, the greater is the necessity for resistance. Thus, advice, persuasion, personal influence, suggestion, or any other such counseling technique may be readily effective when the advice or information given is consistent with the client's already existing phenomenal self. When they are not consistent they are likely to be disturbing and may actually impede his progress by producing greater confusion, or, worse still, may drive him deeper into his position.

It must be remembered that the organization which the client is attempting to maintain is a unique and *personal* organization which the counselor can probably never hope to know in its entirety. Even information which appears to the counselor to be complimentary to his client may actually be disturbing to his organization and resisted by him. To attack the client's organization in counseling is an ex-

tremely easy thing to do. Almost anyone is familiar in his own experience with counselor attacks expressed in such familiar phrases as:

"Now just a minute young man . . ."

"Really, now, it's not as bad as all that."

"Look how many are worse off than you are."

"I've had more experience than you, son, now take my advice."

or even

"You're not so badly off—let me tell you about my experience."

The threat existing for the client is not always readily apparent. Clients have learned through long experience to hide their feelings from others. Since early childhood most clients have been taught to be "gentlemen and ladies" and the threats they feel are not likely to be apparent upon casual observation. When threatened by a counselor they are more likely to agree with him and beat a hasty retreat reserving their opinion about the counselor and his methods for their friends and acquaintances. Or, when threatened, the client may find security in complete dependence on the counselor and take no responsibility himself. To avoid attacking his client the counselor must be possessed of an extremely accurate diagnosis in terms of which he may be able to perceive and forecast the effect of any action he takes from his client's point of view. This is not a task for an amateur. Even with long experience and great sensitivity on the part of the counselor the best of therapists cannot always avoid such threats. Certainly they are not likely to avoid them if they are not constantly and keenly aware of the client's need to maintain and enhance his personal organization.

#### THE TRAUMATIC APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM

In dealing with the problem of threat in therapy three courses seem open to us. The first is an attempt to control and use threat for purposes of therapy. This use of threat in therapy might be called *the traumatic approach*.<sup>4</sup> Its effectiveness depends upon so attacking the individual's organization that he is, literally, frightened into a new concept to avoid a greater threat to his very existence. It is an attempt to utilize threat to bring about a reorganization of the self-

<sup>4</sup>For a further discussion of these methods of change in the phenomenal self see Chapter VI.

concept. There is no doubt whatever that such methods may often result in a reorganization of the self-concept. In fact, there seems reason to believe this may be the real explanation of whatever effectiveness the various types of shock therapy possess. Similarly, it may explain the occasional effectiveness of public duckings in the Salem witchcraft days and the "snake pit" techniques of the early mental hospitals.

Such methods of therapy, however, have serious limitations. We have seen that the effect of severe threat is to drive the individual to a frantic marshalling of his defenses against the threat which he perceives. In this way it is entirely possible that the net effect of threat may be to drive him deeper into his position and may bring about so complete an encystment of the phenomenal self that nothing may be able to free it. This seems particularly likely to occur in those individuals who have adopted as their defense a denial of the very existence of external reality (as in schizophrenics, for example). With such clients, who have adopted an attitude that "what others do doesn't concern" them, the ultimate effect of traumatic attempts at change may only be to convince them all the more certainly that they want nothing to do with a world which takes such a menacing attitude.

Since the extent and nature of the threat in any form of therapy as it is seen by the client is not open to external observation by the therapist, the use of traumatic methods seems an extremely hazardous procedure. To control such threats effectively requires an accuracy of diagnosis that psychology is by no means now equipped to provide. Even if such accurate diagnoses were available the problems posed for the therapist in effectively controlling the extent and direction of the individual's perception of threat would be extremely difficult of solution. Without such control traumatic approaches to therapy must remain for the most part haphazard and fortuitous.

#### THE GRADUAL METHOD OF HANDLING THREAT

A second possibility in dealing with threat in therapy is to subject the individual to experiences having only a small amount of threat at a time. This is the *gradual approach* in which the therapist attempts to induce a series of small adjustments in the client, usually by

gradual manipulation of his environment. Under such a step by step procedure the threat of external reality may be more or less minimized. In this way the client may be able in time to develop a self-concept more adequate to the demands of the world in which he moves. A classic example of this type of treatment is to be seen in the handling of a child's fear of dogs by presenting him with a puppy. The puppy being tiny, and cuddly, and essentially harmless, the child may be able to deal with it effectively and regard it not as a threat but as something to be sought after. He conceives of himself as able to deal with this situation. As the puppy grows this concept may change until the child may come to feel himself able to deal with large dogs as well as small ones. This situation is, of course, oversimplified but serves to illustrate the general type of treatment to which we refer. Another use of this type of treatment may be observed in suggestion. Here the therapist operates directly upon the individual but the attempt to make small, progressive changes remains the same.

Such means of dealing with threat in therapy are often highly effective and probably represent the primary means by which most of us make changes in our concepts of ourselves outside the therapeutic situation. In daily life, so long as the differences between our concepts of self and external reality remain small, the threat we feel is slight and differentiation and acceptance become possible. When there is a considerable disparity between the self-concept and external reality, however, it is likely to present a very different problem and such gradual types of change are no longer so feasible.

The application of this method to the practical therapeutic situation requires an extremely accurate diagnosis on the basis of which it may be possible to forecast the way in which whatever changes are made in the environment will be regarded by the client. It requires, as well, a high degree of skill in balancing factors so that change in the environment may be as great as possible for speedy recovery, yet not so great as to appear too threatening to the client.

#### THE SHELTERED APPROACH IN THERAPY

A third method of dealing with threat in therapy we might call *the sheltered approach*. The basic technique in this case lies in the

removal of the individual from the threat of objective reality for all or a part of the time so that the differentiation of a new self-concept becomes possible. Under such circumstances the individual is no longer driven to defend his position and becomes free to differentiate the various aspects of his field with a minimum of distortion. At the same time, an attempt is made to provide new experiences and new methods of need satisfaction which will result in new and more adequate self-definitions. This principle seems basic to foster-home placement, for example, wherein a child in a threatening environment may be placed in a new home situation in which the threat to himself exists in a lesser degree or is absent entirely. Under these circumstances he may be able to differentiate more clearly the various aspects of his relationship to his world and arrive at a new concept of himself. The success of hospitalization often seems due to this sheltering from threat. It may often be observed that patients sent to mental hospitals rapidly improve without specific treatment. Some such patients show relapses when returned to the threat of their previous life situation, but many also make adequate adjustments which may well be due to new differentiations made while they were removed from threat.

Apparently it is not necessary to remove an individual from threat entirely. The success of such therapeutic techniques as reassurance, praise and encouragement, psychodrama, psychoanalysis, group therapies, play therapy, and many others seem to indicate that if threat can be removed for even a short period of time, positive changes are possible to the client. For most problems of inductive therapy it seems likely that some form of the sheltered approach holds most promise of success in dealing with threat.

### SOME LIMITATIONS OF INDUCTIVE THERAPY

#### LIMITATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL THERAPY

The threatened personality is one which is inadequate to accept the perceptions of external reality. It would appear that therapy could then be directed toward changing either the phenomenal self or external reality to produce a more adequate self. While at first glance

this would appear to be true, in practice, attempts to change environment run into serious limitations.

One of the most important of these limitations has to do with the varying definitions of the external world within which an individual moves. A growing child, for example, may be living in a number of cultural groups at once or in rapid succession as illustrated in the accompanying diagram. His concept of himself, also, may have varying definitions with respect to each of the groups with which he comes

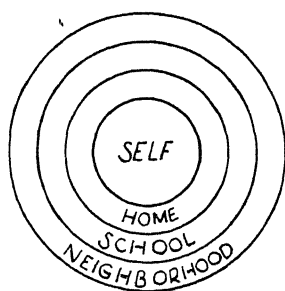


FIG. 7.

in contact. In his earliest years, the child's self-concept may be the result of his home experiences. The older he gets, however, the wider become the outside factors within which he moves as he passes from one cultural group to another. His self-concept becomes defined with respect to his experience in these wider groups. At the same time, the possibility of change in the external world to which he is responding becomes increasingly more difficult.

While it may be possible for us to make some changes in small cultural groups, the amount of change we can produce in larger ones becomes progressively less as the size of the group increases. By the time an individual has reached late adolescence change in his external reality has become very nearly impossible.

This principle is well illustrated in studies of foster-home placement. Studies of this type of treatment are unanimous in their findings that the earlier the child is placed, the more likely are treatment methods of being successful. Beyond the age of nine or ten such methods of treatment rapidly decrease in effectiveness (161). Change in external reality or environment may offer some possibilities for children but seems a distinctly limited and temporary measure for adolescents and adults.<sup>5</sup>

The aim of all therapy of whatever type must be to aid the individ-

<sup>5</sup> Even with children, attempts to change environment or external reality often do not result in cure. Many a child who becomes an adequate reader at a reading clinic, for example, may fail utterly to read satisfactorily in his schoolroom

ual to a self-concept adequate to deal with the wider culture patterns in which he will move as an adult. What is more, the eventual goal of therapy must be to free the individual to operate on his own without the necessity for continuing manipulations of the world about him. A mature society cannot reorganize itself for each individual within its framework. Treatment must, in the long run, be concerned with the development in the individual of the ability to adjust to whatever happens; not to protect him from the world in which he lives.

Environmental therapy can operate effectively only when a subculture to which the individual is responding is out of touch with a larger culture within which the individual is also behaving. For instance, it may be useful and effective to remove a child from a family situation which is in conflict with the demands of a larger social group. In this way the child might be placed, let us say, in a foster home which was consistent with the demands of the larger cultural group. But what about the situation wherein the child has a self-concept considerably apart from the larger group definitions, and where the smaller groups in which he moves are consistent with that larger definition? This problem often arises where delinquency occurs in a middle-class family well accepted in the community, intelligent and well-meaning in their attempts to do the right thing by their child according to accepted standards. In such a case the family is already consistent with the larger cultural group definitions and the possibilities of environmental therapy are extremely limited. The same situation often exists in the case of children with extremely severe feelings of jealousy and rejection in a family situation where every effort is made to make the child feel wanted in the family circle. Children often develop such feelings upon the arrival of a baby brother or sister in the family group. The child is not rejected but *he* thinks he is. Environmental treatment in a case of this kind is bound to be extremely limited. It cannot remove the sibling and to

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situation. Similarly, children often markedly improve in camp therapy only to relapse into old patterns on return home. It does not always follow that changes in self-concept may occur from changes in objective reality.

remove the child from the home would only make matters worse. To send him off to school or to camp, for instance, may appear to him as absolute proof of what he already believes!

#### THE THERAPIST AS A LIMITATION

Inductive therapy assumes that out of the counselor's superior knowledge, training, and experience, the therapist is capable of marshalling the facts and experience pertinent to the problem and, arriving at a basically sound diagnosis, can thereafter direct the client to the mutual benefit and satisfaction of the client and society. Basically, this assumption appears sound and certainly it would appear logical that we should be able to trust superior learning and experience. But, the counselor himself is a variable and his experience and knowledge are necessarily limited to the impact of the peculiar circumstances which have surrounded his development. Not being omniscient, he, as well as his client, can and often does make mistakes. Thus, the demands made upon the therapist in effective inductive therapy are tremendous. In many instances the counselor may be able to meet these demands but, unfortunately, he will often be asked to deal with problems which go far beyond what the entire science of psychology is prepared to help him with.

#### LIMITATION OF INADEQUATE DIAGNOSIS

To bring about acceptance in inductive therapy requires an extremely accurate and painstaking diagnosis of the client and his problem. Such a diagnosis must, furthermore, supply a clear and accurate picture of the dynamics of the individual's behavior from moment to moment. Since the client's behavior is a function of his phenomenal field and since it is not open to direct observation by the therapist, such a diagnosis is an extremely difficult thing to acquire. We have seen in the previous chapter how very tenuous are our steps toward achieving such a degree of accuracy of diagnosis as this demands. Statistically we can occasionally approach a fair degree of accuracy, but dealing with a particular individual at a particular moment poses a very different problem. Psychology is still a very long way from developing a sufficient understanding to provide exactness with



respect to the nature of an individual's phenomenal field. Nevertheless, inductive methods demand an exactitude of diagnosis, such that it may be possible for the therapist to understand, not only the nature of the client's present state, but one which makes possible the prediction of his reaction to any technique the counselor desires to use.

Even if such accuracy of diagnosis were available to us, the problems posed to the therapist of dealing with client meanings, changing the self-concept, dealing with the problem of threat and client need are tremendous. We have not even recognized these problems until fairly recently and certainly we are still far from having developed techniques which make it possible to deal with such matters adequately. The techniques we possess are but tenuous and inaccurate instruments at best. We seem still to be a long way from accurate and certain control of human behavior.

In a way, perhaps it is just as well that we are still unable to control human behavior so precisely. Do we even *want* to be able to control human beings to this extent? Even if the means of control and prediction of behavior were available to us, there is the ethical question of the "right" of any individual to interfere in the life of another to the extent of molding him in the therapist's predetermined pattern. Techniques so accurate as to make possible the complete control of individual behavior could conceivably be highly dangerous. We have just fought a war in which the freedom of the individual to choose his own destiny seems to have been the basic issue at stake. Shall we then, in therapy, seek to mold individuals to our patterns?

We seem to be confronted here with a very serious dilemma. On the one hand the welfare of society and the humane considerations of human happiness demand assistance for threatened personalities. On the other hand, the inductive approach to these problems, while often extremely helpful, has serious limitations which greatly restrict its effectiveness. To what extent can we hope to remove the limitations on inductive therapy about which we have been speaking?

If the phenomenological system we have been developing in this book is accurate, it should be possible for us, given time, to improve inductive techniques by the application of phenomenological principles. Even with the best of thinking, however, it does not seem likely that

we shall be able to surmount the limitations upon environmental treatment, our lack of adequate diagnosis, and, above all, the limitations of the therapist himself in all cases. While improvement of techniques seems possible, these limitations are so fundamental as to seem extremely unlikely of solution for many years to come. Recognizing that inductive techniques will often be effective, is there another approach to these problems free of the limitations upon inductive therapy?

There seems to be. It will be recalled that the techniques of inductive therapy were originally devised in an external frame of reference. Inductive therapy attempts to induce change in the phenomenal field through the manipulation of external forces. Perhaps the limitations we have observed may be the result of this external approach. Can we discover a means of therapy which does not depend upon environmental manipulation, which does not require diagnosis and in which the therapist's judgments are eliminated? If this were possible, it seems likely we could surmount the limitations involved in the inductive approach. In this chapter we have attempted to speculate upon the implications of a phenomenological approach for therapeutic methods originally devised in an external frame of reference. In the following chapter we shall examine a method of therapy more strictly phenomenological in character. Perhaps it may offer a solution to these problems.

## CHAPTER XIV

### *The Personal Approach to Therapy—Self-Directive Methods*

IN the previous chapter we have been discussing methods of therapy depending upon changes in the client's phenomenal field induced by the external operations of the therapist. In this chapter we shall examine a method of therapy which relies almost entirely upon the client himself to make changes in his field when and how he chooses, and in which the therapist's role is solely to provide a situation which will facilitate that process. We have called this approach to therapy self-directive but it is so widely known as non-directive therapy, that, to avoid confusing our readers, we shall bow to propriety and stick to its common but unfortunate title in the remaining discussion.<sup>1</sup>

The philosophy and techniques of non-directive therapy represent a sharp break with the older, traditional methods of treatment which we have been discussing. In the past six years since the publication of Rogers' book, *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, this approach to therapy has been attracting wide attention and use from one end of the country to the other. At the same time a very large body of publication is being added to the psychological literature on the topic. Although it has been repeatedly demonstrated that such methods are often extremely, even dramatically, successful in many instances and with a very wide variety of clients, even the staunchest supporters of non-directive methods frankly admit that they are often at a loss to understand just why this method works. Originally this method of counseling grew out of the experience of psychologists, psychiatrists

<sup>1</sup> Zielonka (222) has suggested the use of the term self-directive in describing this method of therapy. This seems to us an excellent suggestion. It is rather a paradox that a method of therapy which stresses the *client's* activity should be given a name which describes what the *counselor does not do* rather than what the client does do. For other discussions of this question see Combs (42).

and social workers in dealing with clinical cases. It persisted because it worked, although little was known about the theoretical foundations upon which it was based. As time has passed, however, it has become increasingly clear that non-directive techniques are firmly rooted in a phenomenological approach to behavior.

No other field of applied psychology appears to represent so closely in its techniques and philosophy the point of view expressed by this volume as is true of non-directive therapy. In fact, it seems likely that non-directive counseling may even be one of our most potent tools of investigation for research leading to the denial or substantiation of many of the points of phenomenological theory. It is our purpose in this chapter to analyze briefly the techniques and theoretical backgrounds of non-directive therapy from the phenomenological point of view and to attempt some explanation for the effectiveness of such methods.

#### THE CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE THERAPY

In the preceding chapter we have defined psychotherapy as: *the provision of experience whereby the individual is enabled to make more adequate differentiations of the phenomenal self and its relations to external reality.*

Non-directive therapy represents a conscious attempt to provide just such experience. It differs from inductive therapy in that it makes no attempt to control or change the client's meanings in a preconceived direction. Rather, it focuses its attention entirely upon the creation of a "therapeutic situation." It attempts to provide an experience which makes change possible and which frees the client to make changes in his phenomenal field, but leaves the nature and direction of change to the client, himself.

We have seen that effective therapy must deal with four major problems in aiding clients to better adjustment. These were:

1. Therapy must deal effectively with the problem of threat.
2. Therapy must be concerned with change in client meanings.
3. Therapy must result in the more adequate satisfaction of need.
4. More particularly, therapy must be concerned with change in the phenomenal self.

Let us see how non-directive therapy attempts to deal with these problems.

### THE PROBLEM OF THREAT

In our discussion of the nature of maladjustment we have pointed out that a person is maladjusted when his phenomenal self is inadequate, for one reason or another, to deal with the world which surrounds him. Unfortunately, the very existence of this state of affairs subjects the organism to threat to the phenomenal self which he is attempting to maintain. Such threats are revealed in the various forms of fear responses, which are the organism's way of dealing with threat and are the most characteristic symptoms of threatened personalities. These feelings of being threatened are expressed by the individual as fears, dreads, anxieties, guilt, feelings of depression, and the like.

Fortunately, in most life situations the threat to which we are exposed is likely to be more or less clearly differentiated and most of us feel more or less adequate to deal with them. It thus becomes possible for us to deal with the threatening aspects of our environment fairly satisfactorily. When the self-concept is strongly threatened, however, differentiation is not always so feasible, either because of the selective effect of the phenomenal self upon perception or because the threatening situation itself may be not clearly differentiated. Under these circumstances the threatening aspects of life situations may be vague and undefined and our concepts of ourselves may be so inadequate as to keep us under threat for long periods of time. Because our perceptions of ourselves and the world about us are so poorly defined we cannot effectively deal with them and our efforts to resolve the situation may even end by making matters worse. Such threats are extremely common to all of us. Indeed, it is doubtful if even the most well-adjusted individuals are ever completely free of them. The phenomenal self is so complex an organization, composed of so many differing relationships that it would seem impossible to find an individual in which some aspect of self was not, at sometime, threatened.

From our discussion in Chapter VIII, it will be recalled that the basic need of the organism is to maintain and enhance his phenomenal

self. Under considerable amounts of threat he is forced to defend his phenomenal self more strenuously than ever and its reorganization becomes unlikely. Yet, it is only through change in the self and its relation to the external world that an adequate, unthreatened self can be achieved. To resolve this situation non-directive therapy attempts to remove the organism from threat so that differentiation and reorganization of the self in more adequate terms becomes possible.

#### REMOVAL FROM THREAT

In the early days of non-directive counseling a great deal of stress was placed upon the counselor's techniques. By means of these the individual was thought to be helped to his adjustment. Of late years, however, there is a growing feeling among therapists using this approach that the atmosphere of the counseling relationship is of even greater importance to therapy. By this atmosphere is meant, not the physical surroundings or the prestige of the counselor,<sup>2</sup> but a "permissive atmosphere" created in the relationship between the counselor and the client. In the therapy hour the client finds himself in a situation characterized by warmth and responsiveness on the part of his counselor, free from pressure and coercion of any sort, and in which he may express himself in any way he desires within the very broad limits of the counseling relationship. Rogers (1963) describes the relationship as follows:

"From the client's point of view, while he may not be conscious of all these elements at the outset, he does respond to the atmosphere of freedom from all moral approval or disapproval. He finds that he does not need his customary psychological defenses to justify his behavior. He finds neither blame nor oversympathetic indulgence and praise. He finds that the counselor gives him neither undue support nor unwelcome antagonism. Consequently the client can, often for the first time in his life, be genuinely himself, dropping those defensive mechanisms and over compensations which enable him to face the world in general."

As Rogers has suggested, the therapy situation is probably vastly different from any the individual has ever encountered before. In

<sup>2</sup>It is interesting that Roethlisberger and Dickson (1960) have had splendid results with their counselors at Western Electric under the most primitive of physical surroundings and sometimes even with four or five counselors and their clients working in the same room.

daily life the client who desires to tell others of his problems finds others all too ready to tell him theirs. Even worse, he is likely to be subjected to attempts upon the part of those around him to force change upon him in some fashion or other. Such threats do not exist in the counseling relationship and, in that sense, the relationship in therapy is an unrealistic one. We might describe it as a "sheltered atmosphere" in which the client is protected from the ordinary threats of life.<sup>3</sup> Note how the client in the following excerpt from counseling expresses her understanding of this "special" kind of environment created by the therapeutic situation.

S: In here I can talk to you. But if I were to meet you in the hall, you would be just another man and I couldn't talk to you at all.

Another client expresses it this way:

S: Well, I don't know what it is when I'm in here, but here I feel that I can be perfectly honest with myself. I don't have to put on an act.

C: You feel you can be honest with yourself here.

S: Oh yeah! I guess more than I ever have been.

We have seen in Chapter VIII that perception of threat tends to narrow the phenomenal field open for exploration to the vicinity of the threatening perception. As a result, the area of the phenomenal field available to differentiation is sharply reduced. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that the threatened personality continues his errors in behavior and is unable to differentiate more adequate solutions to his problem. The net effect of the non-directive therapist's creation of a non-threatening, permissive atmosphere seems to be: to make a greatly expanded portion of the phenomenal field available to the client for more adequate differentiation.

In such a sheltered atmosphere, protected from the necessity of self defense the client finds himself free to examine himself in any way he desires. He finds no blocks to free expression placed in his path. As Combs (34) has suggested "such treatment makes possible the pursuit of a question to its logical or ultimate conclusion, a process greatly impeded by directive remarks. This freedom to examine and to

<sup>3</sup> Some writers have claimed the position of the counselor in nondirective therapy is that of a "culture surrogate." This does not seem possible to us, for, if the counselor were a surrogate of society, then he, himself, would represent the very external reality so threatening to the client.

pursue a line of thought to its 'bitter end' makes insight possible with greater speed than is otherwise practicable. As one client put it, 'It's like clearing away the brush that confuses the path.' Freed from the necessity of defense and able to carry out such "bitter end" analysis, it becomes possible for the client to explore his phenomenal field in any way he desires and to arrive eventually at new and more adequate perceptions.

#### CHANGE IN PERSONAL MEANINGS

If all behavior is a function of the individual's own personal meanings, it follows that, to change behavior will require a change in his perceptions. We have seen in a previous chapter that the threatened personality was a product of inadequate perceptions.<sup>4</sup> Psychotherapy then, must result in a more adequate perceptions of self, the external world and the relationship of these two. We have outlined in the section above how non-directive therapy attempts to free the client from threat so that differentiation becomes possible. Let us examine now how differentiations occur in this approach to treatment.

#### ENCOURAGING DIFFERENTIATION

Free from threat and the necessity for self-defense, the client is able to examine any and all aspects of his phenomenal field as he desires. He is encouraged in this exploration, in part, by the counselor's sincere and consistent sympathetic understanding and, in part, by his primary technique which has been called "recognition and acceptance of feeling." By this is meant that the counselor responds to his client by recognizing and accepting how he feels about the events he is describing. This is often described as "mirroring" the client's feelings and, in a sense, that is what the therapist does. He attempts to reflect the essential feeling expressed by the client in clear and understandable terms. Sometimes he will recognize and accept the client's feelings by practically restating what he has said as, for example :

<sup>4</sup> It will be recalled that in Chapter VII we pointed out two reasons for this lack of adequate differentiation in : (1) the lack of symbols which would make differentiation possible and (2) the differentiation itself may represent so great a threat that the individual is unable to face it.



S: I get so mad at her sometimes. She does things like that all the time.

C: Sometimes you feel very angry at her. I can see how you might feel that way.

Sometimes, too, the counselor may respond to the feeling in terms quite different from those used by the client as in the following:

S: Yes, it is not at all clear to me. Should I keep it out of sight or keep it out in the open? I still don't know.

C: There are advantages in either direction.

In either event, however, the counselor attempts always to recognize and accept the feeling being expressed by his client. But why should he respond to his client's *feeling*? Why not to any other aspect of his client's statement?

#### RECOGNITION AND ACCEPTANCE OF FEELING

In Chapter VII we pointed out that what the individual is describing when he speaks of his emotions or feelings is in reality his personal reference. For instance, when I describe myself as "tired," I am describing my phenomenal field at this instant. In large part this is a description of my awareness of my body state but includes, as well, all other aspects of my field at this moment, including the fact that I have just looked at the clock and discovered how very late it has become. Thus, when the non-directive counselor stresses the "feelings" of his client, he is helping him to explore and differentiate out of the field the personal reference of events.<sup>5</sup> In emphasizing the client's feelings the counselor assists the client to an exploration of his field through an examination of the "meanings of events" to him. It will be recalled that these meanings of events make up the person's phenomenal field. By recognizing and stating these meanings, clearly and sharply he assists his client to further differentiations until, eventually, this process may arrive at those differentiations most troublesome or fear producing for the client. Once that point has been reached new adjustments become possible.

<sup>5</sup> This probably explains why it has been found in non-directive counseling that counselor references to content or to "third party feelings"—that is, to the feelings of someone other than the client—may delay or impede his progress.

It is important to remember here that the technique of which we are speaking is known as "*recognition and acceptance*" of feeling. This acceptance aspect is of primary importance. Obviously, if the therapist does not accept the personal reference of the client, he is under threat from the therapist and is forced to defend himself inside the counseling situation as he did outside. This would result in resistance to therapy. Under these circumstances, he can make no progress and may even feel so threatened as to become antagonistic to the counselor or may leave the therapy situation entirely.<sup>6</sup>

#### INTERPRETATION IN THERAPY

It may be argued that if the emphasis of counseling should be upon the meaning of events to the client, then interpretation should help to speed this process along. It would appear that, if the therapist can perceive these meanings before his client has seen them and point them out to him, differentiations should occur more rapidly. While at first glance this might appear to be so, actually the use of interpretation may often be disastrous to the client's progress and may impede or destroy the counseling relationship entirely. For, interpretations made when the client has not reached a stage of differentiation where he can accept such interpretations are not *his* personal reference but the counselor's. As the counselor's interpretations they may even appear to the client as threatening and force him to defend his position not only against external perceptions but the counselor as well.

The technique of recognition and acceptance of feeling is, in reality, recognition and acceptance of the client's personal reference. It is concerned with assisting him to a differentiation of the meanings of events in his peculiar, private organization. It seems likely, furthermore, that to overemphasize "feelings" in this connection may even serve to make the process of differentiation more difficult than it might otherwise be for him. If our analysis is correct, any means of ex-

<sup>6</sup> The experience of one of the authors in teaching counseling and psychotherapy has often revealed the difficulty of getting young counselors who have led extremely sheltered lives with few major adjustments in life to achieve this acceptant attitude. It may often be noted that beginning counselors do their best work with clients having problems much like their own, probably because they can be more acceptant.

pressing the personal reference should be effective so long as it does not create a threat for the client. Actually, this is what most non-directive counselors do and there seems to be no particular advantage in restricting themselves to statements emphasizing feeling, if other means of expressing the personal meanings of events can be as effectively employed.

#### THE EFFECT OF RECOGNITION AND ACCEPTANCE OF PERSONAL REFERENCE

Aided by the therapist's techniques of recognition and acceptance of personal reference, the client is able to differentiate more and more sharply the various aspects of the phenomenal field. In this process he is exploring and examining the relationship of himself to the life situations in which he moves. As counseling progresses he comes more and more clearly to perceive three important aspects of his field; his "self," the nature of external reality, and the relations of these two. Time after time in the protocols of counseling these three aspects may be observed to become clearer and clearer in the statements of clients as they proceed in therapy. A young woman who came for therapy with one of the authors of this volume, was the daughter of a minister. All her life she had led a fairly exemplary life for the benefit of her family and the congregation. Going away to school and being forced at last to live her own life, she was deeply confused and upset. In the following series of statements from the eighth interview with this young woman, note how she struggles with her concept of herself and her relationship to the world about her as she attempts to differentiate just what she is. Note, too, that at this point in counseling the threatening aspects of her situation are by no means clearly differentiated.

A couple of years ago I heard one of Dad's sermons in which he said "A person has to like himself." From then on I took it for granted that I did. I decided I wouldn't change for anything—Until this week, when I began wondering if I really did. I decided I liked myself but I also despised myself. Remember I told you I was afraid of failure because I had never really experienced it—Hooey! I've never really had anything but failure.

I've decided I'm a two sided, two faced person. I've always had to act

one way although I felt another. I've always had to be something I'm not. I feel like a different person at home and away.

I'm not sure now what I'm like—I don't know what I am. I'm a man without a country. I don't think I ever knew really what I was. I give appearances but down under I'm not that at all.

What is myself? It's funny how sure I was and now I'm not sure at all. I feel so miserable, afraid and worried. I'm afraid of everything at the moment but I can't find what I'm afraid of. I'm afraid to live like this for the rest of my life but I'm even more scared as to what to do about it. I'm afraid even to think about it. The more I think the more worried and scared I get—It gets worse and worse.

My problem is myself. Everything's wrong but I don't know what it is. What am I? I'm human, female, five feet seven, period. . . . I want to be sure but I'm not even sure of myself. . . . Maybe I know what I am but I'm afraid of it. I'm in a panic about myself.

I never felt I could be myself. I couldn't be because of my father's job. Now I know I must change myself but what am I? I must know that.

This stared me in the face. I'm face to face with it but I just can't do it. I keep getting this far and that's all. I'm stopped. One side of me says "What can you do?" and the other side of me says "You've got to, you've got to, you've got to!" *It's a battle between what I think I am and what I really am.*

After a similar experience in counseling a mother who had been rejecting her children, because they did not come up to the standards of others, arrives at this insight or differentiation of the threat to herself.

S: I've been struggling with this for weeks but I know now what it is. I'm ashamed of myself for not seeing it before and ashamed of myself because that's what it has turned out to be.

C: You feel the thing you have been afraid of is pretty clear to you now.

S: Yes it is, but I can't say I'm proud of it. All along I've been upset because of what other people's children were like. My poor kids—when I think of what I've done to them!

C: You feel pretty upset by what other people think.

S: That's right. Always it's been like that. I'm afraid I have been pretty selfish in all this.

#### THE OPERATION OF NEED

Non-directive therapists in discussing their philosophies and techniques have repeatedly spoken of the "drive of the individual toward

growth, health and adjustment" (162). These writers have not always been clear as to the nature of the drive upon which their method of therapy is based. Many lay readers have been confused by such descriptions and have assumed that this drive was some sort of mystical, esoteric characteristic not open to observation. From the wealth of cases which have now been published illustrating the use of non-directive methods, it may repeatedly be observed that something approaching this "drive" is certainly characteristic of the process. It may even be observed in many cases that the client moves toward a healthy condition even though the movement may be accompanied by the most extreme anguish for himself. Note in the following example (34) how the client, although suffering severely, nevertheless seems driven to continue her counseling contacts:

S: You didn't tell me when I started this thing that I was playing with dynamite. I can't accept this thing! I can't eat, I can't sleep. Every morning before I come here I lose my breakfast before I get out of the house. I have to push myself constantly. It's awful! I set my clock so I'll get up in time to get here early. I stand out in the hall there and it seems like hours before I can get up nerve enough even to open the door and come in.

C: It's a pretty painful business.

S: It is. It certainly is! But it's not you that's doing this to me. It's me. It's the most awful struggle I've ever had—still—this is what I want to do more than anything in the world!

In the closing phases of counseling, clients often express themselves strongly with respect to the changes which have come about within themselves in the course of their experience. For example, in his final contact with the counselor, one client says:

S: My mind is made up. I'm going to do it. You know this is the first time in my life I have been absolutely honest with myself.

And another says:

S: I have been thinking how I have reacted. As I look back at myself, I feel that all that is not a part of me at all. It's like the person back there was a different person. I have come a long way from saying the things I said back there. Things that annoyed me then, don't annoy me anymore.

C: They seem pretty much in the past.

S: I'm afraid they were very, very silly. But somehow I don't feel

badly that that was me. I feel I have gone beyond it. I think I have gained a lot, but I'm afraid there are likely to be some relapses along the way.

C: You are afraid of these?

S: No, I'm not afraid of them; I mean I think they will occur.

C: I think that's quite right.

S: Maybe I'm just fooling myself—maybe this isn't progress—but no—I can't believe that. I find it awfully hard to tell you just what has happened to me. I can't seem to put my finger on it. And yet, something has happened. I'm not the same person as I was.

C: Perhaps you no longer need me then.

S: Yes, I think we're about finished. I think that undoubtedly I'll have some more difficulties from time to time, but I feel that I'll be much better able to handle them. I know I'll never be in such a mess as I have been.

C: That sounds reasonable doesn't it? Would you like to come back again?

S: I think that from here in it's up to me—But I want you to know how much I appreciate this. I'm not quite clear on what we have been doing, but this much I know—It certainly has done the trick.

When one considers, that in this type of therapy the counselor has remained non-directive and has carefully refrained from any coercion of his client in any direction, it is not possible that such changes can have been brought about by the counselor. We must presume, therefore, that whatever "drive" exists has its origin in the client.

#### THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF NEED

It will be recognized by the reader that this fundamental assumption of non-directive therapy is not greatly different from the phenomenological point of view in which the organism is seen as attempting to maintain or enhance the phenomenal self.<sup>7</sup> Since this need is universal it would be very surprising if it did not exist in counseling as everywhere else. What is more, since the organism is concerned not only with maintaining his present organization, but in enhancing that of the phenomenal self we would expect him to move not only, toward negative elimination of his difficulties, but positively, toward growth, maturity and greater independence as well providing he is free to make any and all differentiations. It is to this need in operation which non-directive therapists refer in describing the "therapeutic

<sup>7</sup> Both Combs (34) and Raimy (154) in discussing this drive have pointed out the similarity between this drive and the biologic concept of homeostasis.

relationship itself as a growth experience" (164, 42). It appears, therefore, that it is the need of the organism to maintain or enhance the phenomenal self upon which non-directive counseling is based. Therapy attempts to utilize the need characteristic of all of us to aid the client to a better adjustment.

#### KNOWLEDGE AND NEED

We have seen in our discussion of the educational implications of a phenomenological system that there may be a considerable disparity between what a person knows and what he does. And this is true of adjustment as well. Most so-called "maladjusted" behavior is not due to the fact that we do not know any better but that, at the moment of action, we *needed* to behave as we did. For instance, not long ago one of the authors drove his car through a red light. Now, he was well aware that he should not go through red lights, but he did. Why did he? Because he was in a hurry to keep an appointment—he *needed* to behave as he did. Indeed, it wasn't until he had gone three blocks past the light that he was even aware of what he had done. His behavior was not a matter of not knowing, but of being unable to accept the perception at the moment of his action. The red light was perceived in the not-self portion of the phenomenal field because, had it been perceived as related to self, it would have been threatening to the author's satisfaction of need. Had he not been so intent on the satisfaction of his need and had he been able to perceive the red light, not as a threatening object but one contributing to his need satisfaction, he would have stopped. Knowledge is useful only if it is perceived as contributing to need satisfaction. It is even possible that knowledge may place the threatened individual under greater threat than ever. Under greater threat he may be driven to protect his existing organization and may, in the final analysis, be worse off than ever. This serves to explain in some measure why it is that "telling people" is often violently resisted and may even result in increasing the distress of the client. Note how the client, herself, expresses this increased confusion from "telling" in the following excerpt:

S: You can think and think so long and you can try to talk yourself into things—you can tell yourself you are just timid, I talk myself out of

it and philosophize and all that. I can forget for a while—for the time being and then it comes back. Sometimes I feel so melancholy and then I tell myself I am just being self-centered, that there are many people worse off than I am. I might be blind for instance. I know it's silly to feel so badly about ordinary everyday things. It seems as though I should have control and not let things affect me so much. Maybe I'm not put together right—but I just can't. They told me I wasn't sociable enough with girls and ought to mingle with them more. And I try telling myself that is what I ought to do. But I can't seem to change myself that way—just by saying it to myself. It just makes more conflict inside and I don't have any satisfaction at all. (*pause*) If by nature you're shy and retiring, you can work real hard and talk yourself into things sometimes and it may show on the outside but not on the inside. Then it hurts more than anything. Oh, I know psychology doesn't agree. It tells you a lot of things—they seem to think an individual can change and do anything he wants. I can't.

Somewhat later in counseling this client says:

S: They say when you know your faults and attack them—why you soon get over them. I've tried that for years but it's no good.

C: Mm mm.

S: It all sounds good in the books you read and the lectures you hear—but it doesn't work when you try to put it in practice. You just can't change a person to being boisterous and noisy when they are fundamentally shy. It can only be done on the outside. You can't force it on them, and I don't think you should. *It just makes a worse conflict than ever and that's all that remains—just the conflict.*

To say, that an individual in a severe psychological problem maintains his "maladjustment" because it gives him satisfaction is only partly true. It is not likely that he would enjoy and attempt to perpetuate this painful condition if he could perceive any better alternative. Rather, if he maintains his "maladjustment" it seems more likely that he does so because he *must* do so to maintain or enhance his phenomenal self in the situation as he sees it. Thus, the client who says "I know what I ought to do but I can't do it" is saying, in effect, that from a purely external or objective point of view, what he should do is clear, but from his own personal point of view, his behavior is necessary to protect his organization. Knowledge can only contribute to need satisfaction if it is accepted into the individual's personal



organization. For adequate adjustment, perception of not-self events must be incorporated in the self. This requires a reorganization of the phenomenal self. How does this come about in non-directive therapy?

### THE REDEFINITION OF SELF

It is interesting how little the re-evaluation of the self in non-directive therapy has been recognized. Some writers have even gone so far as to suggest that until non-directive therapy found ways of changing the self-concept it could not be truly considered a fundamental form of therapy. Actually, it is this very redefinition of the self-concept which is the most striking and characteristic aspect of the entire process. Raimy (154), in his doctoral dissertation on the self-concept, has clearly demonstrated that shifts in the self-concept do occur in non-directive therapy. He points out, for example, that in the course of therapy the "self-regarding" statements of his clients demonstrate a shift from self-disapproval to greater and greater self-approval with progress in counseling.

With a clear differentiation of the relationship between self and the external world and with clarification of the nature of threat to the organization of the phenomenal self in the permissive atmosphere of non-directive therapy, the stage is set for a shift in the self-concept. Under these circumstances such a redefinition of the phenomenal self and its relationship to external reality becomes not only possible but almost inevitable. But why should this be true?

### THE DYNAMICS OF REORGANIZATION OF THE PHENOMENAL SELF

As we have seen, the threatened individual has a self-concept inadequate to accept his perceptions of external events. Since his need is to maintain or enhance the organization of the phenomenal self and since his perceptions of external affairs endanger that organization, he is driven to defend himself and is incapable of making any great change in the self-concept. What is more, the selective effects of the self-concept on perception makes the likelihood of any change in the self-concept even more remote, for the client may not even be

able to perceive the source of the threat to which he is exposed.<sup>8</sup> Eventually, under these circumstances the threat to the client's organization may become so great as to be almost intolerable yet he is unable to differentiate the nature of the terror to which he is exposed or what solutions are possible to him. The individual finds himself in a position where he cannot bear to remain as he is, yet cannot perceive any more adequate ways of behaving. If he could perceive what was wrong, the threat he perceived would force him to change in order to maintain or enhance the phenomenal self and the threat would be eliminated. Either in or out of counseling, once he has differentiated clearly, the threat is no longer vague and all inclusive but can be perceived more precisely as finite and capable of being dealt with.

At this point in therapy we come to what appears at first glance as a paradox—namely, that the same need to maintain and enhance the phenomenal self which brought the individual under threat in the first place, operates to assist the client to a readjustment of his self-concept and actually results in its change. Let us take an example to see how this comes about. Mr. Jones feels deeply threatened but cannot explain the source of his dread. So far as he is concerned he is just afraid of "something" but does not know what. Under these circumstances his need to maintain and enhance his organization causes him to defend his self-concept, and he may be unable to perceive either the nature of the threat or the necessity for a re-evaluation of his self-concept in more adequate terms. In therapy he tells us of this threat which he feels but cannot put his finger on it. He describes it as vague, diffuse and is anxious and worried although he has nothing to worry about so far as he can see. As therapy progresses, he continues his exploration of his field and finally comes to differentiate clearly his own evaluation of himself and that of the

<sup>8</sup> Often, in the course of counseling, the source of this threat may become clear to the experienced therapist long before it appears to the client. The therapist, however, soon learns not to act on this information until his client has come to a closer realization of the threat on his own efforts. To act before that point has been reached may subject the client to too great a threat—the very thing non-directive therapy hopes to avoid. It is also true that, even for very experienced counselors these counselor diagnoses often prove later in counseling to have been in error or to have additional turns never dreamed of by the counselor in his earlier evaluations.

events surrounding him. He tells us finally that he dislikes himself intensely. He feels he is a very unworthy person. What he is really afraid of is "What people will think of me." Now with the situation clearly perceived, his need to maintain or enhance the phenomenal self brings him to a reorganization of his self-concept in closer alignment with external reality. Anything else is impossible, for to remain as he is, is intolerable and keeps him under threat. The only thing which will remove the threat is to take the direction now clear to him as a result of his sharper differentiation of the situation. Before counseling, his need forced him to maintain his position because it was impossible for him to perceive that any other possibility existed. After he has achieved a clear differentiation of the situation in counseling,<sup>9</sup> to maintain his present self-concept is intolerable and the maintenance and enhancement of the phenomenal self lies in making some change in its organization. Thus, he may redefine himself as no better or worse than other men and really not such a bad person after all. With such a reorganization of self he may be able to like himself better and perceptions of external events will appear less threatening. In other words, if it becomes clear that enhancement of the phenomenal self is to be achieved by reorganization, the organism will move in that direction providing the threat to his present position is dissipated.

It is just this sort of shift in the organization of the self-concept which is characteristic of non-directive therapy. While therapy is a device by which such changes are facilitated, the same types of changes are made repeatedly in the life of the average person. The very act of growing up involves a continuous process of reorganization or modification of the self-concept as one moves from childhood, to youth, to manhood, to marriage, to middle age, and finally to old age. So long as the threat to the existing phenomenal self is not too great, reorganization continues smoothly as the person perceives the changes occurring in himself and his surroundings. Under extreme

<sup>9</sup> The authors do not wish to imply that this can occur only in counseling. On the contrary, this sort of change has been occurring for thousands of years before counseling was ever invented. Counseling represents only a man-made technique which speeds up the process and gives us hope of reaching those many individuals who might otherwise never have achieved such differentiation in their normal experiences.

threat, however, the individual's self-concept may become encysted,<sup>10</sup> as often happens in children who feel threatened by growing up when parents push too hard for grown up skills. If the pressure becomes too great such reorganization may be resisted. For instance, the six-year-old daughter of one of the authors charmingly expressed this desire to maintain her organization under just such circumstances. When pressure of parents and school to "grow up" became too great she asked her father one evening at bed time, "Daddy, can I be your baby?" and then hastily added, "But don't tell anyone. Let's keep it a secret just for us two." Psychological "Growth" is a process of change in self-definitions.

#### THE EFFECT OF REORGANIZATION OF THE PHENOMENAL SELF

If behavior is the direct concomitant of the phenomenal field and if the major aspect of the phenomenal field is the phenomenal self, whatever behavior the individual displays will be an expression of the organization of his phenomenal self. We would therefore expect that a reorganization of the phenomenal self would result in change in behavior as well. And this is exactly what occurs following changes in the self-concept as a result of therapy. Perhaps one of the best examples of this change is reported in Snyder's (194) case of Robert Winslow Smith. When this young man had achieved a new concept of himself as a grown up, as free from the restrictions of his youth and as capable in his own right, he even changed his name from Winslow, which he was called as a child, to Robert or Bob which better expressed the new self he experienced.

In the same volume Combs (194) has reported a case of a young woman who previous to counseling had defined her phenomenal self to exclude her deformed hand. When she had come to an acceptance of the fact that her hand was really a part of her self, changes occurred automatically in her behavior. She enters her last interview with this statement:

S: I am greatly improved. I am greatly elated. I don't know what happened but something happened. Two people have told me this week,

<sup>10</sup> It is interesting that this same effect of extreme threat has been utilized by Toynbee (209) to explain the cessation of growth or encystment of cultures.

"Something has happened to Edith." Why things that I never even knew about they mention. My roommate said to me last night, "Edith, did you know that at the table tonight you are not hiding your hand anymore?" Why I was so surprised! And then last night up in our room I was combing my hair when one of the girls came in. I never did a thing like this before, but I went right on combing my hair and I didn't even know that I was doing it. This girl told me about it afterwards. She said that she had never seen me do a thing like that.

Frequently in non-directive therapy such changes in the self-concept may occur with dramatic suddenness; for instance, a young woman unable to accept her own sex desires and who had three times postponed her marriage because of this fact, enters the counselor's office breathless and saying:

S: I think it's helped me. I slept last night—eight hours—I'm so proud of myself! And Bill said I'm changed. I feel so much better. I think I've changed my attitude. It's funny—You know, I gave another girl a pep talk. She's one of these people who says "she's above all that." I got to talking to her and before I knew it, I was giving her a pep talk—I said, "Nuts to all that! Nobody is above anything. Get wise to yourself." Isn't that crazy? Imagine me!!!

C: I see, you . . . .

S: And I'm not afraid anymore—I honestly don't feel afraid a bit. I just feel changed a lot. I don't know what happened. I can hardly believe it.

And another client states:

S: There I was sitting in the library reading. All of a sudden it hit me. It was the craziest thing—Just like that! I thought "It's stupid of me to go on like I am. I'm just not a brilliant person and that's all." It was just all me—mentally! It was so funny. There I was—and I thought "Here everybody else is adjusted to themselves and you're trying to adjust to everyone but yourself."

C: You feel it is necessary to accept yourself.

S: That's right. I know I'll never change from what I am. I was so excited I couldn't think last night. I thought—*suppose you had told me what to do? . . . . I'm so glad you didn't!*

#### THE PERMANENCE OF CHANGE

Changes brought about in non-directive therapy may often be remarkably permanent. There is good reason why this should be true.

Perhaps the greatest number of cases in which the self has become seriously threatened are due to the movement of the individual from one cultural group to another. This includes, of course, those many situations in which adult maladjustments are hangovers from childhood self-definitions. A great many of our maladjustments seem to arise from this early period of life when differentiations are far less clear than is true of adults, and when the child may even lack the necessary symbols in terms of which more adequate differentiations can be made. A fundamental reorganization of self made as an adolescent or as an adult may, therefore, have a highly permanent effect for two reasons: (1) He has shaken off the inadequate self-definitions imposed upon him as a child and is now better able to make clearer and more adequate ones than was possible to him in earlier days. (2) As a growing child, the individual was moving into wider and wider cultural groups as he moved from family to neighborhood group, to school, to gang, to social groups, etc. We have seen that this movement from one culture to another is often the source of threatening perceptions as the self-concept formed in one group becomes inadequate to deal with the new group. When, however, the individual has reached adult status, he has reached a point where he is no longer moving into such drastically different subcultures. His horizons have expanded to a point where they include most of those groups in which he will move as an adult. Thus, because he is no longer so likely to be moving from subculture to wider culture and because he has a greater differentiating ability, once he has achieved a more adequate self-definition in terms of present cultural reality, the likelihood of his falling again into error is far more remote than it was in his earlier years.

To summarize our discussion, non-directive therapy appears to be a consciously created situation in which the client is freed to differentiate more adequately his phenomenal self, the external world and the relationships of these two. It utilizes the client's own need to maintain or enhance his phenomenal self as a driving force and, when successful, results in more adequate perceptions of self and the external world.

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## SOME IMPLICATIONS OF NON-DIRECTIVE THERAPY

## RANGE OF USE

The total range of usefulness of non-directive therapy is still far from clear. Nevertheless, important strides are being made toward discovering its broader implications. To date, these methods have been used effectively in individual therapy and in group therapy with a wide variety of clients. They have been used with much success with adults in a counseling relationship and with children in play therapy (12). As opportunity is afforded for further research we may be able to discover interesting new applications of its techniques.

Non-directive therapy is by no means a panacea, nor is it likely to replace many of the inductive therapeutic techniques we have discussed in the previous chapter. Many environmental aspects of therapy, in particular, must always be of concern to a progressive society, not only as therapy, but as prevention as well. Where these new methods will eventually lead us in the treatment of behavior is, at this time, impossible to say. Nevertheless, they have given us at least a partial demonstration of the effectiveness of phenomenological principles applied. It seems likely that a further extension of such principles in other areas might well lead to similar results.

It may even be possible, in time, by the extension of these phenomenological principles, to discover more adequate means of dealing with those most threatened personalities our society now finds it necessary to institutionalize. If our theoretical discussion proves adequate, for example, the fundamental techniques of non-directive therapy may lead the way to assisting psychotics, criminals, or even some types of "mentally deficient" cases to more adequate and effective living. In time, it might conceivably make vast changes in institutional treatment through a conscious, systematic attempt to free the client from threat and aid differentiation. It is interesting to speculate on ways in which we might create non-threatening sheltered atmospheres for threatened persons of all types, not only in the face to face counseling relationship, but with respect to large segments of the client's total environment.

## NON-DIRECTIVE TECHNIQUES AND EDUCATIONAL METHOD

With some modifications, the use of non-directive techniques as educational method have already shown promise of important results. The work of Nathaniel Cantor,<sup>11</sup> for instance, has much in common with non-directive methods of therapy. Other workers are experimenting with these techniques as this book goes to press. One of the authors has been utilizing such techniques extensively in teaching college classes. From our studies to date, students show greater interest, read more widely, and seem to learn more effectively than is true in traditionally taught classes. What is more, many other values quite aside from academic objectives seem to be achieved. For example, such classes have superior morale and often seem to motivate important and lasting personality changes as well.

At first glance the application of non-directive techniques to education may seem rather far fetched. However, it will be recalled that we have described the learning process as one of differentiation in the phenomenal field. This is exactly what occurs in therapy too. It is not so surprising then, that techniques which contribute to learning in one situation should be effective in another. This is not meant to imply that education and therapy are identical in all respects. However, they do have many identical elements and the techniques of non-directive therapy hold promise, with some modifications, of contributing to more efficient learning quite outside the therapeutic relationship itself. This seems like a profitable field of research.

## NON-DIRECTIVE THERAPY AS A TECHNIQUE FOR PERSONALITY STUDY

The observations he made as he listened to his patients in therapy led Freud to some of the keenest and most revolutionary observations in psychological science. He discovered a priceless source of information into the inner recesses of his client's personalities and from them was able to make generalizations about behavior, perhaps unsurpassed by any one man in the history of our science. Now, with the development of electrical recording devices (45) it becomes possible to make such observations into personality with an accuracy and reliability never

<sup>11</sup> *Dynamics of Learning*, Buffalo, Foster & Stewart, 1946.



before approached. As Rogers (164) has pointed out these observations are similar to medical diagnostic instruments such as the X-ray, the stethoscope, or radioactive matter in the blood stream which enable the external observer to examine the inner dynamics of the patient as never before.

The protocols of non-directive therapy are particularly useful for this purpose in a phenomenological frame of reference where we are concerned with the client's ways of perceiving himself and the world he lives in. In non-directive therapy the client is freed and helped to examine, with a minimum of distortion and direction, the very aspects in which the phenomenological psychologist is interested. They give us "a rare opportunity to see to some extent through the eyes of another person—to perceive the world as it appears to him, to achieve at least partially, the internal frame of reference of another person. We see his behavior through his eyes, and also the psychological meaning which it had for him. We see, also, changes in personality and behavior, and the meanings which those changes have for the individual. We are admitted freely into the backstage of the person's living where we can observe from within some of the dramas of internal change, which are often far more compelling and moving than the drama which is presented on the stage viewed by the public" (164, page 359).

PART III

THE PERSONAL APPROACH  
AS A METHOD OF SCIENCE



## Σ CHAPTER XV Σ

### *The Place of a Phenomenological Approach in Psychology*

#### THE NEED FOR A NEW WAY OF STUDYING BEHAVIOR

IN studying human behavior the psychologist must adopt one or the other of two very different points of view which lead to very different results. Using the traditional method he looks at behavior from the point of view of an external observer who ignores all aspects of the situation except those which can be measured in quantitative objective<sup>1</sup> units. This method has proved very successful as a means of studying the behavior of non-animate objects. It is often thought of, erroneously, as *the* method of science. It is, of course, the only method of study open to physicists, astronomers, and other observers of in-animate behavior.

The psychologist, however, since he is dealing with conscious, living organisms, has another alternative. He may, if he wishes, look at behavior from the point of view of the individual who is behaving.

The first approach is usually called the objective approach, the second the phenomenological approach. For about three centuries the objective approach has been regarded as the only possible approach for any science, but we believe that the trend of events in all sciences during the last fifty years calls for a re-examination of this belief.

In the first place, any point of view in science must be judged by its results. The purpose of science, to the pure scientist, is understanding; to the applied scientist it is the prediction and control of behavior. Judged by either standard, the objective frame of reference, which has been so useful in physics, chemistry, and the other physical sciences,

<sup>1</sup>“Objective—Belonging to what is external to the mind, hence, when used of literature or art, containing no trace of the writer’s or artist’s own feeling or individuality.” Annandale’s *Concise English Dictionary*, Glasgow, Blackie & Sons, Ltd.

has not justified itself as the frame of reference for psychology. It has, for instance, failed to solve the problems of individual behavior, which are the crucial problems for most psychologists. By the most effective methods of objective psychology we are still unable to predict what any individual will do except in terms of central tendencies. This is about the level of effectiveness the physical sciences had reached four hundred years ago.

At the same time psychologists and other people are continually being confronted with the necessity for understanding the behavior of a specific person. This is true of clinical psychologists, educational psychologists, industrial psychologists, in fact it is true of almost all workers in the applied fields of psychology, which means all those who deal with people. To help our clients and our students in our professional capacity, to get along with our wives and families in our private capacity, we must be able to predict what they will do in situations they have never before encountered. Unless we can understand how a given person will behave in a particular situation we cannot know how to help him or how to deal with him. If we cannot predict results we cannot prescribe treatment.

#### THE NEED FOR PREDICTION OF INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR

But the conventional laws of psychology, which are based upon various modifications of the objective approach, do not refer to specific individuals and do not pretend to do so. They are normative principles which purport to predict what the "normal person," "the average adult," or "the typical twelve-year-old" will do "other things being equal." Since they are not expected to apply with accuracy to any particular individual these rules come equipped with coefficients of correlation and standard deviations to express their probable degree of error when applied to a specific person. That probability of error is usually very large. The result is that the predictions of individual behavior made by objective principles are very inaccurate.

The failure of the objective approach to provide a frame of reference for dealing with individual behavior is especially evident to workers, like the clinical psychologists, who are expected to deal with individuals whose behavior differs markedly from that usually con-

sidered "normal." As a result, objective methods are rarely used in practice by workers in such fields.<sup>2</sup>

If psychologists had to make a choice between the power to predict individual behavior and the power to predict normative behavior they would, almost without exception, choose to predict individual behavior. By the methods used to predict the behavior of the specific individual, they would then be able to predict the behavior of the "typical" individual as well. The time has come for psychologists to make that choice and to accept the accurate prediction of individual behavior as their goal.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRAME OF REFERENCE OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES

This cannot be done if we must insist on clinging to the objective frame of reference and its limitations. Although psychologists like to feel that they are using the methods of the physical sciences, the physical sciences themselves are using a variety of different frames of reference. If they had been unwilling to use non-Euclidian geometry they would not have produced the atom bomb. It seems hard to believe that the Galilean-Newtonian frame of reference can still be regarded as the only possible or even the most likely basis for predicting the behavior of individuals. To understand its limitations it is necessary to look back to the seventeenth century and see how it came to acquire the prestige that it still maintains in popular thought.

In that century, three hundred years ago, physicists were facing the same difficulties that the psychologists are facing today. To the scientist of that time the behavior of individual moving objects seemed so variable and irregular that the physical sciences were restricted to the normative type of prediction, as is psychology today. Objects were then classified according to their inferred nature, as are mental hospital patients today, but no other means of discovering regularity was available.<sup>3</sup> No scholar of the period before Galileo,

<sup>2</sup> Elkin (60), for instance, found that of twelve psychologists interpreting a case study "only one gave a theory which might be considered derived from the laboratory."

<sup>3</sup> When variability of behavior is accepted, as in Aristotelian physics or in present day psychology, the usual strategy has been to reduce the amount of

Kepler, and Newton, basing his assumptions upon the physical observations and theories of his time, could have anticipated the refined accuracy in prediction that is possible in modern physics.

As we see it now, the failure of medieval observers to find the lawfulness which we now take for granted in the field of physics was due to the fact that the discovery of regularity in behavior is as much a function of the observer and the frame of reference which he is using as of the phenomena themselves. To use an illustration from physics, the path and velocity of any object in the room in which I am now writing are functions of the fixed point from which that object is observed. If we take the room itself as the point from which our measurements are taken the chair in which I am sitting is motionless. If, however, we take the center of the earth as our fixed point of reference the chair and I are whirling around it at the rate of 600 miles an hour. If the measurement is taken with the sun as the fixed point the chair and I are moving in a complex path and at a tremendous speed since we are revolving at 600 miles an hour around a point on the axis of the earth, which itself is moving around the sun at the incredible speed of 65,000 miles an hour. If we take Vega or the central spaces of the Milky Way as our fixed point of reference the motions and speeds are even more spectacular, in the latter case ranging up to a thousand times the speed of sound in air.

These illustrations are important because they make a point which

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uncertainty by classifying the objects or individuals according to their inferred nature. Thus if we classify an object as a balloon or an individual as an introvert we can make some gross predictions about the behavior of each. Since all balloons and all introverts do not behave in exactly the same way further classification is carried on, if possible. As soon as this division into subclasses becomes useless or impossible the remaining variability is accepted as inevitable and predicted on a statistical basis of probabilities. This is very common practice. The mental hospital technique of diagnosis is an example of this strategy. If a patient has been classified as a schizophrenic it is then possible to predict the chances of his discharge on the basis of the percentage of schizophrenics who have been discharged in the past. This normative prediction is fairly satisfactory for administrative use such as the planning of the hospital facilities that will be required in the future, but it is very inadequate for predicting the behavior or for planning the treatment of an individual patient. It is inadequate because it considers him as a class member only and ignores the individual characteristics that differentiate him from the abstract "typical" member of his class. The same prediction is made for every class member and consequently the prediction for each specific person is inaccurate.

is still ignored by many psychologists, as they were by medieval physicists. The point is that facts are not independent things that we can memorize and depend upon and know that they will always be true. A fact is derived from a particular frame of reference and is true only in that frame of reference. If I assume that I am sitting still, as I am in the first frame of reference above, while my chair is going 600 miles an hour, as it is in the second, while my typewriter is flashing away at 18 miles a *second*, as it is the last, the resulting confusion might be dangerous. It would certainly interfere with my use of the typewriter. To have order, regularity, and predictability, we must restrict our observations to a common frame of reference. Pre-Galilean physics, like most present day psychologies, ignored this principle and treated observations made from different fixed points and frames of reference as if they were independent and absolute facts. As a result the order which we now observe was not detected.

#### REDUCTION OF OBSERVATIONS TO LENGTH

Physics was saved from the futility of accepting the apparently irregular behavior of individual objects as true and final by the adoption of a new frame of reference which all observers could share. This was achieved by purging the field of physics of all those aspects of experience upon which competent observers could not agree. A comparative judgment of the length of two objects laid side by side, made from the standard position for comparison, is about the only judgment on which two different people are almost certain to agree. The phenomena of physics were accordingly purged of all characteristics which are not reducible to length. As a result the world of the physical sciences, after Galileo, consisted of only those aspects of phenomena which can be expressed in units of length. For instance, mass is defined in terms of volume, which is defined in terms of length. Temperature is measured in terms of volume of a gas, and is therefore reducible to length. Time is measured in units which are equal to the period of a pendulum of a specified length in a specified place. It is usually measured by distance along a circular scale. Heat is measured in calories which are defined in terms of the change in temperature (defined in terms of length) and a measured volume (defined in terms of



length) of water. If phenomena could not be measured in terms of length they could not be dealt with by the methods of physics.<sup>4</sup> In order to secure agreement only those aspects of experience which can be reduced to length have been accepted as data. All these measurements, furthermore, are observed by the scientist from the same point: a position directly before the instrument. Since any two qualified observers viewing a situation from the same point at the same time must necessarily agree closely in their measurements of length a great area of agreement was discovered by the physicists as soon as they began to ignore all other aspects of phenomena. Newton, for instance, was able to formulate the laws governing moving bodies almost at once.

From the point of view we have expressed in this book the physical scientists were able to secure agreement by restricting themselves to a common phenomenal field. As long as they restrict themselves to this common field their professional behavior, their calculations, and predictions are naturally identical.

This brilliant act of self-denial made the fortune of the physical sciences. But it condemned psychology to poverty and impotence for as long a period as psychologists insisted on confining themselves to the same limited frame of reference. In imitating the physicists and disregarding all aspects of phenomena which can not be objectively measured the objective psychologists have unwittingly eliminated all observable causes for individual differences in behavior. There is nothing in the abstracted objective "physical field" to account for such individual differences.<sup>5</sup>

#### INADEQUACY OF THE OBJECTIVE FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR PSYCHOLOGY

But individual differences in behavior of living organisms do exist and they are observed. The behavior of non-living objects when seen

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Descartes' distinction between mind and matter. Matter takes up space, it has linear dimensions.

<sup>5</sup> This process gives to physical scientists the unique advantage of a common field; but it is a field where all the characteristics of phenomena are eliminated except those reducible to length; where light, color, temperature, taste, and odor exist, if at all, only as readings on a scale; and where song, oratory, poetry, and propaganda are alternating areas of condensation and rarefaction" (200).

in the objective frame of reference is orderly, regular, and predictable. But viewed in the same frame of reference the behavior of conscious living organisms is irregular and variable, and relatively unpredictable. In the same physical situation different people behave differently. And, what is even more confusing, in the same physical situation the same person behaves differently at different times. In terms of the physical environment, the behavior of living organisms is erratic, irregular, and relatively unpredictable.

It might seem reasonable to conclude from this that the objective frame of reference, satisfactory as it is for the prediction of the behavior of inanimate objects, is too limited to function as a satisfactory frame of reference for the prediction of the behavior of individual living organisms. At least one eminent physicist of the present day, Schrodinger, is convinced that this is true. The laws of physics, he points out, (185) are all derivations of the second law of thermodynamics (entropy principle), of the tendency of matter to go over into disorder. Living organisms have as their essential characteristic the creation and maintenance of order, the avoidance of entropy. A dead organism obeys the laws of physics and subsides into thermodynamic equilibrium. A living organism does not. Its behavior is therefore not amenable to prediction by the laws of present-day chemistry and physics. For the accurate prediction of animate behavior, he assures us, a wider and more inclusive frame of reference is necessary.

Unfortunately for the progress of psychology, the scientists and laymen of the seventeenth century did not think in the relativistic terms of the twentieth. Because the objective "physical" field proved to be a field where agreement, order, and regularity reigned they began to think of it as the true reality. At the same time they began to think of individual experiences and meanings as illusory or at least secondary.

In a period when scientific thinking was absolute rather than relativistic, when there was one geometry, not many, and when the search was for "truth" and "reality" rather than for frames of reference useful for specific purposes, such a conclusion was inevitable. But the acceptance of the external physical field as the frame of reference for studying human behavior led at once to difficulties and problems which are still unsolved and may, indeed, be insoluble.

The history of psychology from that time has been the history of a series of unsuccessful attempts to explain why, in the same physical situation, individuals behave differently. Among these unsuccessful attempts the mind-body explanation was the earliest.

#### THE MIND-BODY EXPLANATION OF BEHAVIOR

We might state this body-mind explanation of behavior as follows: Two individuals, in the same environment, behave differently because they have different minds. The same individual, in the same situation, behaves differently because he has "changed his mind." Seen in this setting, the mind was a very satisfactory *explanation* for individual variations in behavior. It is not surprising, therefore, that even after psychologists have been forced to abandon it as a causal concept, it is still firmly entrenched in popular thinking, although many people nowadays do confuse mind with the brain. Since the mind is a non-physical entity and is not open to direct observation, it can be endowed with any characteristics that are needed to explain any behavior that may be observed, without any possibility of disproof.

The fact that a supposed cause of behavior is not open to direct inspection does not always mean that its nature cannot be studied. This can sometimes be done by inference.<sup>6</sup> If mind had been postulated as a factor in all behavior it would have been possible to infer the nature of a person's mind from his behavior. These inferences could have been tested and revised in the light of his later behavior until an approximation sufficiently accurate for prediction had been secured.

Mind, however, was not used in that way. Since it was assumed that the laws of physics had priority and that the chief cause of behavior was in the physical environment, which was considered "reality," mind was invoked only to explain the individual aspects of behavior while the normative aspects tended to be ascribed to the direct influence of the physical environment on the body. This acceptance of dual causation was fatal to any possibilities of predicting individual behavior because the individual was now made into a battleground for

<sup>6</sup> A very large part of the accepted facts about the nervous system have been arrived at in this fashion. Not all the objects of study are directly observable even in the physical sciences, particularly in chemistry and subatomic physics.

two conflicting forces, each endowed with different functions and processes. Behavior was thus due to sensation or reflection, to instinct or reason, was voluntary or non-voluntary, was innate or learned, was emotional or rational, was normal or abnormal. What was seen was a perception; or it was an illusion<sup>7</sup> and therefore unreal. Prediction was impossible because of the number of independent processes involved. After almost three centuries of study the mind remains an explanatory concept only, completely useless for the study of individual behavior.

#### THE NERVOUS SYSTEM AS A CAUSAL CONCEPT

At its best the mind was an unsatisfactory concept. It became increasingly unsatisfactory to the members of an increasingly mechanized society which was coming more and more to accept the primary reality of matter and to regard the universe as an elaborate machine. The discovery, in the early part of the nineteenth century, of the reflex arc and of the distinction between sensory and motor nerves made it possible for those psychologists who wished to do so to ascribe the individual characteristics of behavior to another causal factor, the nervous system. This substitution of the nervous system for the mind<sup>8</sup> as the explanation for individual differences in behavior was more satisfying because it restricted the supposed causes of behavior to the material field of physical reality, in which all parts are potentially open to observation. The early discoveries of nerve action also offered a new hope of reducing individual behavior to order and predictability. In decorticate animals or isolated nerve-units, for instance, it was found that stimulation of a given nerve always resulted in the same muscular response. Here at last, in the "simple" reflex was animal behavior which had all the regularity and dependability of the behavior of inanimate objects. True, invariable responses never occur in the intact organism. But at least no one could doubt that the reflexes existed and it seemed very reasonable to suppose that they were the

<sup>7</sup> A present-day example of this tendency is the practice of classifying needs as physiological and psychological.

<sup>8</sup> The substitution was not immediate but gradual with the mind and the brain moving closer and closer in popular thinking until they had come to be almost synonymous.

real bases of behavior, the elements of which it was composed. A little further study, it seemed, would show how these reflexes were combined and integrated into the individual patterns which distinguish the behavior of specific individuals.

#### INADEQUACY OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM AS CAUSE

While the resulting studies of the effect of single stimuli on the mutilated organism or on an animal in harness have given us much useful information and many suggestions, they have been disappointing as guides to what the intact organism or the free animal will do. In any situation there are always thousands of potential stimuli. If the observer restricts his observations to the immediate external situation he has no way of knowing which of these potential stimuli will affect the behavior. Since it is possible to investigate the relations between a subject's behavior and any aspect of a situation which can be experienced by an observer the objective psychologist has, by now, become embarrassed by an overabundance of causal factors. Buel (27) has reviewed eighty-three factors which have been found to affect the pathway chosen by a white rat approaching a choice point in a maze. He points out that the list is not exhaustive and the eighty-third factor is "chance." The hopelessness of using such a large number of independent causes as bases for accurate prediction is obvious.

From considerations of consistency and convenience the nervous system was vastly superior to the mind as an *explanatory* concept in objective psychology. It is a physical entity and is therefore potentially open to observation and measurement. So its addition to the physical environment did not spoil the theoretical objectivity of the causal field. Also, since it is largely inaccessible to direct observation, it can, like the mind, be endowed with any characteristics that are required without much danger of disproof. This is a great convenience for purposes of explanation although, as Lashley pointed out, it does not really increase our knowledge of behavior or of the nervous system.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> One productive exception is Kohler's explanation of reversible figures by principles of electrolytic conduction, which led to the successful prediction of other perceptual behavior (106, p. 473; 107).

At one time no psychology text was complete without a section on the nervous system; but in recent years, as more knowledge about the nervous system has accumulated, psychologists have been more and more wary about stating their theories in neurological terms. At the present time we know too much about the nervous system for it to be the free field for explanatory theorizing that it once was; and we do not know enough about it to use it as an adequate vehicle for prediction (92, page 275; 202, page 52). As a result, while present-day "objectivists" maintain their allegiance to the nervous system as the effective cause of the individual aspects of behavior, they have tended to avoid it in their theory constructs and talk instead about "intervening variables." While it is a very reasonable assumption that the perfection of instruments and methods which would make the nervous system of the intact individual completely accessible would greatly facilitate the prediction of behavior, there are reasons which indicate that even the most complete knowledge of the nervous system might be inadequate for accurate prediction of individual behavior. For one thing, the problem of translating neurological or other organic facts into exact behavioral facts may be too baffling for solution. Even if they were observable they would have to be described in neurological, chemical, and mathematical terms which would still require translation into behavioral terms before they could be used in the prediction of behavior. Indeed we cannot be certain that a translation into behavioral terms will be possible at all. At its simplest the task of a psychologist in predicting the behavior of an individual from measurements of the objective physical forces present in him and in his environment would be at least as difficult as the task of a group of meteorologists in making out a weather prediction. It might be far more difficult. In any case it would almost certainly be too complicated and too time consuming to be practical. At present, because the organic data are not available, it is impossible.

In addition, even if the required instruments for the detection of organic changes were available, the prediction of individual behavior from the external approach would be limited to those cases where the instruments could be used. That is, the prediction of an individual's behavior would be possible only if he could be brought into the

laboratory or hospital. In other words, even if perfected it would not help us to deal with any person who was not already amenable to our physical control. The very people that we need most to understand, the important people with power, the foreign statesmen, and the unfriendly neighbors cannot be studied or understood by this method because they will not voluntarily expose themselves to our instruments.

#### INADEQUACY OF SYMBOLIC CONSTRUCTS FOR PREDICTING INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR

A more promising alternative for the objective psychologist, during the present period of neurological uncertainty, is to state his theories of relation in the form of symbolic constructs which, while not directly observable, are objective in the sense that they can be measured by inference. This technique, advocated by Hull and his associates, gives the theorist almost complete freedom as long as his inferred causal entities conform to his initial postulates and the observed data. Hull (92) in giving an example of the use of this method uses "habit" and "organic drive" as well as "strength of the afferent neural impulse" as the concepts which are added to the observed external situation to provide for individual variations in behavior.<sup>10</sup> This freedom from neurological limitations is won at some cost, however, as the postulated causes that are not present in the physical environment of the behavior or in a measurable form in his physical organism must be referred to the past and their values can only be calculated from the past behavior of the individual. This process, even if successful, would be too cumbersome and lengthy to use in the prediction of individual behavior.

#### INADEQUACY OF THE STATISTICAL APPROACH

There is at the present time a strong tendency for non-personal psychologists to accept variability as an inescapable aspect of individual behavior and to restrict themselves to estimates of probability

<sup>10</sup> The example cited by Hull, referred to above, is a normative equation and does not claim to be exact, since it includes as one factor "the probability of reaction evocation" (92 p. 280).

and statements of the odds for the occurrence of a given act in a given situation without making any inferences about the causal relation between them (218, 177).

This is a hard-headed and realistic response to the failure of other objective theorists to provide us with any instruments for predicting the behavior of individuals. Let us not mislead ourselves, say these writers, with fairy tales. Let us confine ourselves to the facts that we can observe. If 12 per cent of the readers in a community respond to an advertisement by sending in box tops then we shall predict that 12 per cent, more or less, will respond in other communities. The trouble is that the usefulness of this method is confined to situations which are very similar to the ones from which the original statistics were secured. So in practice there may be many more or many less. Since the method provides no theory as to why anyone sent in the box tops it is impossible to predict how many people will respond to a different advertisement or in a different community. The method is a rule-of-thumb method whose accuracy is in doubt as soon as the situation is changed in any way.

Furthermore, the statistical method is unable to make predictions about the behavior of an individual. Allport (4) has stated this objection:

"The second ground for misgiving lies in the fact that the modern methodologist, no less than his predecessors throughout the history of psychological science, fails to see the peculiar need in psychology for the prediction of the individual event. Of the two kinds of prediction appropriate to psychology—the actuarial and the individual—the former only, up to now, has received the attention it deserves.

"Suppose we set out to discover the chance of John Brown to make good on parole, and use for the purpose an index of prediction based upon parole violations and parole successes of men with similar histories. We find that 72% of the men with John's antecedents make good, and many of us conclude that John has a 72% chance of making good. There is an obvious error there. The fact that 72% of the men having the same antecedent record as John will make good is merely an actuarial statement. It tells us nothing about John. If we knew John sufficiently well, we might say not that he has a 72% chance of making good, but that he, as an individual, was almost certain to succeed or else to fail. Indeed, if we believe in determinism at all, his chances are either zero or else 100. . . ."



## THE ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Our hard-pressed society is in acute need of a much better understanding of human nature and human needs. The failure of the objective approach to provide the required information must not cause us to give up the search. Psychologists believe that the behavior of living organisms is lawful and that it is not governed by chance. If we have used chance as a concept we have used it only as a means of expressing the uncertainty in prediction which exists with our present methods. We believe in lawfulness for two reasons: (1) we have already found enough order and regularity to encourage us in our search for more and (2) if we did not believe that human behavior is lawful and determined we should have to accept the conclusion that it cannot be predicted or controlled and withdraw from the field of psychology. So we assume that it must be lawful and try to discover the laws.

The phenomenal field of the behaving organism seems to be the most promising field for that search. Even if the prospects for the eventual prediction of individual behavior by objective methods were much greater than they now appear to be we could not afford to overlook the phenomenological frame of reference. Any point of view which is so widely used deserves thorough exploration and investigation. We cannot afford to overlook any possibilities.

Galileo has been dead for only three centuries and Newton for only two. Remembering that the very concept of accuracy and regularity in physics was impossible until these men and others had developed the restricted frame of reference that made the observation of regularity and lawfulness possible, it does not seem time for us to abandon hope for a similarly productive frame of reference in psychology. If the thesis of this book is correct, such a frame of reference may be found within the phenomenal field of the individual who is behaving.

## THE EVOLUTION AND FUNCTION OF THE PHENOMENAL FIELD

The phenomenal field does not have an existence independent of the organism of which it is a function and it is not open to direct

observation. It is therefore hard for people committed to the external approach to see how it can be thought of as existing at all, let alone causing anything. Once, however, we are willing to move into a wider frame of reference and accept the common-sense concept that awareness is a cause of behavior it becomes apparent that the phenomenal field plays a vital role in the survival of the organism. It also appears that the physical potentialities which make the phenomenal field of a human being possible are the result of an evolutionary process in which the organisms having the most extensive and highly differentiated fields have had distinct advantages.

The survival of any organism depends upon its ability to deal with those parts of the physical environment with which it comes in actual contact. From the environment it touches it secures the energy and materials for maintenance and from this part of the environment it may also receive injury and destruction. But for either to happen, the source and the organism must come into physical contact. Food which remains an inch away is not food. As for danger, "a miss is as good as a mile."

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPATIAL AWARENESS

As a consequence, organisms without distance receptors can use, for maintaining their organization, only those materials which happen to bump into them or with which they blindly come into contact. They are unable to seek out and secure such materials with any precision or efficiency. At the same time they are unable to anticipate and avoid the disruptive forces in their neighborhood and are at the mercy of any of these which they happen to encounter. By developing distance receptors and motility<sup>1</sup> an organism may considerably expand its field of action and increase its ability to maintain its organization. By enlarging the size of the physical field of which it is aware

<sup>1</sup> If this analysis is correct we should expect to find that all organisms with distance receptors will also have motility, since distance receptors are of no advantage without motility. On the other hand small organisms with a high reproductive rate will find motility of advantage even though they do not have distance receptors because it moves them away from competition with one another and from concentrations which can easily be detected by enemies. As a result organisms having distance receptors always have motility, but motility is not always accompanied by distance receptors.

at any given moment, the organism has gained access to a greatly augmented supply of the energy and materials it requires<sup>12</sup> and has also acquired the means of detecting danger at a distance and a wider field of space in which to withdraw from it.

The usefulness of such a field depends upon its extent and the degree of differentiation and precision which the organism is able to achieve. A significant factor in the rise of man to his present degree of control over his environment has been the development of erect posture which has given him a wider range of vision than his four-footed competitors and, by keeping his hands free for precise manipulation of the environment, has made it possible for him to achieve and profit from a greater precision in the visual and tactual aspects of the field than other animals are able to achieve. The value of any physical function to the organism is determined and limited by the other qualities of that organism. Vision is of no value to a tree. Because of their short stature, which cuts their field of vision, a high level of visual acuity would likewise be useless to most breeds of dogs. The long-legged sight hounds, which can use it, are the only dogs which have good eyesight. The primates, living in trees, had the height above the ground and the manual equipment to make a higher degree of visual acuity useful. Because of their upright posture this superior eyesight was still useful when our ancestors came down to the ground. As a result man has a perceptual field which has a size and precision unequalled by that of any competitor.

#### THE AWARENESS OF TIME

The extension of the organism's phenomenal field by the development of distance receptors involves, however, much more than an extension in space. The distance receptors give the organism possessing them a phenomenal field of which not only distance but also time can be an aspect. In fact, it is hard to see how distance receptors can be effective unless some sort of time awareness develops along with them. Objects at a distance are not immediately available or immedi-

<sup>12</sup> This success is not without disadvantages because the success of such organisms in mobilizing larger amounts of energy and materials from the environment makes them more attractive prey for other organisms.

ately disruptive. In relation to the organism itself such objects are in the future or in the past but not in the present. As a result, the awareness of objects at a distance involves, for full biological usefulness, an awareness of temporal distance and relations, i.e., of past and future. An organism which has achieved such a phenomenal field lives in and commands the resources of a behavioral field vastly greater in its size and potentialities for the satisfaction of need than do those organisms, mobile or immobile, whose behavioral fields are limited to the aspects of the environment with which they are directly in contact.<sup>18</sup> Nor is this all. Through a complementary process of physical evolution and social invention it is now possible for a human being, by the use of symbols, to enlarge his field to include events and objects which are far distant in time and space, to include ideas, principles, and concepts far beyond the range of his senses. Seen from this point of view the construction of the phenomenal field is an essential aspect of the organism's efforts to deal with its environment. The potentialities of the individual human being for extending his phenomenal field, for constructing a conceptual field as an arena for his behavior and thus dealing more effectively with his physical environment are the present stage of an evolutionary development which in part has now been consciously assumed by man himself. Evolution is too slow; so we are now extending our individual potentialities with radar, Geiger counters, electronics, new systems of mathematics, and other types of symbols which can still further enlarge and enrich our individual fields. In the developing conceptual worlds of the various sciences, each dealing with entities no one has ever seen, each one finding explanation behind explanation, reality behind reality, it is increasingly difficult to regard consciousness and awareness as an epiphenomenon, as a curious by-product of human behavior which is without significance or function. As our nineteenth century concepts of physical reality as consisting only of solid little chunks of matter fade before the wider frame of modern physics, such an idea becomes

<sup>18</sup> The process has not been an unmixed blessing since the extension of our field in space and time has not only given us more resources, it has made us aware of more dangers. As soon as it was noised around that pre-frontal lobotomy could alleviate this condition large numbers of people began asking for the operation.

harder to accept. What we have called reality turns out to be only experience. As the things we have taken for reality come to be recognized as only schema and concepts of reality which are acceptable for the present purposes of a particular science they lose their priority as causes and we may again be willing to accept as a cause of behavior what common sense has recognized all along, the schema and concepts of the individual himself. It would be indeed strange and quite contrary to our present concepts of biology if anything as widespread as consciousness should have developed and spread unless it performed an essential function in the survival of those organisms which have it. It is our assumption that this is correct and that the phenomenal field is an essential factor in the efforts of the organism to maintain its organization. In our experience, in the frame of reference we have chosen, the phenomenal field is the behavioral field of the organism, the effective cause of its behavior.

## *Appendices*



## ⌘ APPENDIX A ⌘

### THE INADEQUACY OF LOGIC AS A GUIDE TO BEHAVIOR

It is often said that it would be better if people behaved according to the rules of logic. Almost everyone agrees that they do not do so. The consensus is that logic is right and people are wrong.

However, from the point of view we have described in this book people cannot be expected to behave logically. In fact in many situations, our behavior would be less effective and efficient if we did base our behavior on purely logical analyses of the situation.

In the first place, the field of logic is a field purged of all personal reference and meanings. Since the basic motive of behavior is the preservation and enhancement of the phenomenal self there is no behavior toward parts of the field which do not have personal reference. For instance, there is almost no personal relationship between the individual and any of the terms in the proposition: "If all B's are A's and some B's are C's then some C's are A's." In an effort to secure a proposition which will have universal validity the factors in this proposition have been carefully purged of all personal reference and meaning. As a result the individual has no need or desire to deal with them. Courses in logic often consist, as a result, in teaching the students to translate such propositions into more meaningful terms like "All Republicans are Americans and some Republicans are Methodists so some Methodists are Americans," and back again.

In the second place, the field of logic is not an accurate representation of the phenomenal field since it limits itself to those factors (usually not more than two or three) which are sufficiently differentiated to be put into words. Features of the phenomenal field which have not emerged far enough into figure to be verbalized are ignored and omitted in logic but not in actual behavior. It is the reluctance of the individual to give up these vaguely differentiated features of his field, the hunches and minimal cues, that make him refuse to behave logically. Would he behave more effectively if he did give them up? Sometimes he would, for they often represent factors in the situation which he would discard if he could examine them in



more detail. In other cases, however, the feelings and vague hunches that logic would discard represent vital factors in the situation and ignoring them may lead to disaster.

In the third place, logic, along with mathematics, distorts the phenomenal field by a system of classification which treats all individuals of a class as indistinguishable and thus blocks the further differentiation between individuals which would further improve the effectiveness of behavior. For instance, in both logic and mathematics one orange is usually equal to another orange. This assumption is known to be untrue by all people who buy their oranges at markets where they can select their own.

By our basic postulate behavior is completely determined by the phenomenal field of the behavior at the moment of action. Since the field of logic is not an accurate representation of the phenomenal field, people are bound to behave illogically. In view of the fact that reducing a situation to a logical proposition robs the situation of many details and cues which may be important, it is probably just as well.

## ⌘ APPENDIX B ⌘

### THE CONDITIONED RESPONSE FROM THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

Psychologists using the external approach tend to base their descriptions of learning upon the conditioned response, and eclectic psychologists sometimes speak of it as a completely different type of learning, following its own laws and development. To give those students who are interested a short summary of the phenomenological explanation of the behavior upon which the conditioned response theories are based we are quoting below part of an article by Snygg (200), The phenomenological principles referred to by letter in the text are as follows:

- B. Behavior is completely determined by and pertinent to the phenomenological field of the behaving organism.
- C. There is some relationship between the phenomenological fields of different individuals.
- D. Greater precision of behavior (learning) is concomitant with greater differentiation of the phenomenological field.
- E. The characteristics of the parts of the phenomenological field are determined by the character of the field itself.
- F. Differentiation takes time.

The explanations follow.

#### I. CONDITIONING

a. *Objective Description.* Given an animal with a need (e.g., for food), and a means of affecting that need (e.g., food). Present a signal (e.g., a tone) of a kind that in sufficient volume and under favorable circumstances is capable of eliciting a response from the animal, then, in fairly close temporal and spatial contiguity, present the means of affecting the need (the "unconditioned stimulus"). After one or more presentations the signal will elicit the same response as the unconditioned stimulus or a response similar to it.

b. *Explanation.* Given time (f) and a need to be satisfied (E), the signal and the unconditioned stimulus will be differentiated as a

unit from a relatively homogeneous field. Since the degree of differentiation required is determined by the precision of response required (D) signals for diffuse bodily and postural activity may be effective at a very low level of awareness. The closer the signal and unconditioned stimulus in the experimenter's time and space, the more apt they are to be differentiated as a unit from the rest of the learner's field (C). It would not be expected (B) that the response to the signal-stimulus unit would be exactly the same as to the stimulus alone. In a class demonstration with a human subject, using a strong buzzer tone one second before a strong shock to the right forefinger from a curved finger rest, the unconditioned response was an extension of the finger. The conditioned response, however, was flexion together with a lifting of the finger, the whole action taking it off the grill. Phenomenologically the subject was bracing himself for the expected shock.

## 2. IRRADIATION

a. *Objective Description.* If the signal is altered within a varying range the established response will still be made.

b. *Explanation.* If the signal is incompletely differentiated it may be confused with other signals. If it is experienced as a vague feeling of discomfort or expectancy a large number of signals in different sense fields might elicit the response. If it is more clearly individuated there will be less opportunity for confusion with other signals.

On the basis of this inference that 'irradiation' and 'generalization' are incomplete differentiation, it would be predicted that continued presentations of the signal-stimulus unit will, by giving more opportunity for precise differentiation (F) of the signal, lessen the number of signals with which it might be confused and diminish the probability of 'irradiation' responses. This prediction corresponds to the results reported by Razran (1956), although it does not agree with his interpretation.

## 3. DIFFERENTIATION

a. *Objective Description.* Both signal A and signal A' elicit the response. If signal A is given with the unconditioned stimulus and signal A' without it, the latter signal will cease to elicit the response.

b. *Explanation.* Presentation of signal A without food makes it

necessary (E) and possible (F) for the subject to differentiate it from signal A'.

#### 4. UNCONDITIONING

a. *Objective Description.* If the signal is given without the unconditioned stimulus or some time after it, it will, after a varying number of presentations, cease to elicit the unit response.

b. *Explanation.* Separate presentation provides the subject with an opportunity for differentiating them from one another (C) (F). The signal from a signal-food unit should have no effect even the first time it is given after food if the need for food has been completely satisfied (E). The signal from signal-punishment units, however, would be effective for several presentations when given after the punishment, since the need to escape punishment is not satiable. Repeated presentations, however, will give an opportunity for differentiation and the signal will eventually emerge as a cue that punishment has ceased and will then evoke a different response.

#### 5. PSEUDO-CONDITIONING

a. *Objective Description.* "In some cases a response is elicited by a formerly inadequate stimulus (signal) which has been preceded by an unconditioned stimulus" (78).

b. *Explanation.* In cases where the unconditioned stimulus is one, like punishment, that leads to a continuing state of need and tension, the animal will differentiate out and respond to features of the field previously ignored. The signal is effective because it is unfamiliar, that is to say, it is incompletely differentiated from the shock situation. "The animals gave the impression of responding *as if* a shock were expected and *as if* they knew no appropriate response to make" (78). In cases where the unconditioned stimulus satisfies the subject's need pseudo-conditioning will not occur.

## ⌘ APPENDIX C ⌘

### THE PLEASURE-PAIN THEORY

The pleasure-pain theory of motivation is derived from the behavior's point of view and experience and owes its present ill-repute to the efforts of psychologists to apply it in the external frame of reference, where it has no meaning. To fit the theory that our behavior is determined by a need to obtain pleasure and avoid pain into an external "objective" frame of reference it has been necessary to identify the pleasure or pain with the possession of certain objects or the performance of certain acts. Since the possession of any object or the performance of any act may give the same person pleasure at one time or pain at another, predictions based upon this external point of view have proved unreliable and the whole principle discredited. It has even been found that the punishment of correct responses may promote learning, *if the subject wishes to learn*. The principle that we seek pleasure is correct from the point of view of the learner himself, but it does not particularly advance our ability to predict, since the only way to know what gives a person pleasure at a given time is to know what his need and goals are at that time. If we know what they are the use of pleasure as a separate motivating force is unnecessary.

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